

Learning English through Finnish as a foreign language

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study is to investigate how English language learning happens in an environment where the language used to facilitate learning is a foreign language for the learner. The research uses sociocultural theory as basis for understanding the phenomenon as students and teacher in a multilingual classroom bring their own language and culture to an environment to engage in acquisition of a third language. The method for research was a semi-structured group interview of six individuals who all spoke a dialect of Persian and had spent two years in Finland. A thematic analysis of the interview yielded eight themes that were divided to two groups; one focused on the community level of language learning and the other on multilingualism in language learning. The community level focused on classroom and student interaction, and analysis showed that both Finnish and the L1 were used as a tool for understanding what was being taught in the classroom. Learning happened in the classroom, between peers and autodidactically, and attitudes towards learning were brought from the home country to the classroom. Motivators, outside the aim, were mostly positively related to the teacher and negatively related to competition between peers. The aim for language acquisition was English as a lingua franca. Multilingualism on the individual level was equally present in both in language acquisition and use. Finnish was used as a support for learning grammar and vocabulary especially in relation to its link as a language used in a Western culture, however the L1 was the preferred language for learning especially when students studied on their own as this language too had similarities to English to draw from. Students' choice in language in speech reflected both preference due to proficiency as well as word choice due to linking languages to various environments. Translation was the most important tool in learning and Finnish was a useful language in this regard due to the translation programmes yielding better results in this language. Language loss was related to the proficiency in the specific language as well as how demanding the environment was as Finnish and English were both prone to language loss though Finnish less so due to being used at a school environment. The L1 was susceptible to language loss as everyday interaction did not demand as high a level of language use.

Tiivistelmä

Tämän tapaustutkimuksen päämääränä on selvittää, kuinka englanninkielen opiskelu tapahtuu ympäristössä, jossa opetuskieli on oppilaalle vieras. Tutkimus käyttää lähtökohtana sosiokulttuurista teoriaa, jolloin tarkastelussa tärkeänä pidetään näkökulmaa, jossa oppilas ja opettaja tuo oman kulttuurin ja kielensä opiskeluun ja nämä yhdistyvät kieliluokassa kolmannen kielen opiskeluun. Tutkimusmetodina käytössä oli kuuden henkilön puolistrukturoitu ryhmähaastattelu, jossa kaikki osallistujat puhuivat jotain persiankielen murretta ja olivat olleet Suomessa kaksi vuotta. Haastattelun temaattisen analyysin avulla syntyi kahdeksasta teemasta kaksi suurempaa ryhmää; yksi keskittyi opiskeluun yhteisötasolla ja toinen monikielisyteen. Opiskelu yhteisötasolla keskittyi vuorovaikutukseen sekä luokassa että oppilaiden välillä. Haastattelun analyysi osoitti, että sekä L1 että suomen kieli olivat luokassa työvälineinä, joiden avulla opetettavaa materiaalia pystyttiin ymmärtämään. Oppimista tapahtui luokassa, oppilaiden välillä, sekä autodidaktisesti ja oppilaat toivat kotimaastaan oppimiseen liittyviä asenteita. Motivaattorit, itse kielen oppimisen syyn lisäksi, liittyivät enimmäkseen positiivisesti opettajaan ja negatiivisesti oppilaiden väliseen kilpailuun. Englannin oppimisessa oppilaat tähtäsivät kielen käyttöön yhteiskielenä. Monikielinen taso keskittyy yksilön kielen opiskeluun ja oli myös näkyvissä yksilöiden kielenkäytössä. Suomea opiskelijat käyttivät sanaston ja kieliopin opiskeluun varsinkin koska suomen kieltä, kuten myös englantia, käytetään länsimaissa. Oppilaiden L1 oli silti käytössä varsinkin yksin opiskelussa, sillä myös tässä kielessä on kielellisiä yhteyksiä englannin kieleen. Oppilaiden kielivalintaan vaikutti se mitä oli mukavinta käyttää. Tämä näkyi yksittäisissä sanavalinnoissa, riippuen siitä mitä kieltä oppilas käytti tietyssä kontekstissa. Kääntäminen oli kielen oppimisessa tärkein työkalu ja suomen kieli oli tähän liittyen käytännöllinen käännösvälineiden tarkkuuden vuoksi. Kielen häviäminen liittyi paitsi kielitaitoon, myös siihen kuinka vaativaa kielenkäyttöä ympäristö vaati, sillä englantia ja suomi molemmat saattoivat kärsiä huonon kielitaidon takia, vaikkakin suomi vähemmän koska se oli koulukieli. Häviäminen näkyi myös L1- kielessä koska ympäristö ei vaatinut korkeatasoista kielenkäyttöä.

1. Introduction

Learning has been quite extensively studied throughout history with different theories pertaining to learning ranging from the behaviourist learning theory of the age-old carrot-and-stick method to the more modern sociocultural learning theory which looks at the influence of an individual's social group and culture and their influence on learning. Especially when viewed from a sociocultural perspective, the difference in context for adult learning is vastly different to that of a child which is why learning cannot be viewed as being the same in all age groups. In addition to social differences between and adult and child, the physiology is different as well, as a child's brain is more plastic, evidence being, for example, that an adult has extreme difficulty trying to learn the accent of a foreign language to the level of perfection that a child can. What an adult has as an advantage over a child however, is refined thinking developed with prior knowledge and possibly education as their brain has developed completely which is seen in how adults tend to learn grammar faster than children. There is also the question of what exactly is the individual even trying to learn when learning languages? A specific skill, whether physical, such as producing the right sounds, or mental, like learning the grammar for the specific language, or a more anthropologic angle looking at a new way of thinking entirely to fit the requirements of a new culture, which can include things like political landscapes, attitudes and philosophies? Is the learning happening in a classroom, one-on-one, or is it an attempt at autodidactic learning, and crucially, why is something being learnt? Currently there seems to be a focus on the learners' capability to use and shape the world they live in though what they have learnt and different approaches to how the individual relates to society or is connected to it.

Finland like the rest of Europe has had an influx of immigrants coming into the country in recent years. As they are being accepted, each immigrant must go through and complete basic education if they have not already acquired a degree equal to Finnish basic education. In Finnish basic education immigrants will receive teaching of the English and Swedish languages as it is part of the requirements set by the state. As is, there are not enough teachers who could teach these individuals foreign languages in their L1 and teaching must happen via some other language, which in most cases will be Finnish. It is in Finland's best interest that

these immigrants will learn Finnish, English and Swedish in an efficient and effective manner that will aid the immigrant to fully assimilate into Finnish culture, and this must happen through good teaching. This same scenario happens all over the world with differing variables, and this type of research will be of use in all these situations.

The questions driving this research on learning English through a foreign language include: how do students learn English when the language of instruction is a foreign language? What are the difficulties that students face when learning English through a foreign language? What aspects of learning should specifically be paid attention to when English is taught through a foreign language? The thesis shall first present the theoretical framework relating to the subject, which shall be followed by a description of the research approach. The analysis of the material is divided thematically into two larger sections with four sub-sections each. The thesis is finished with a discussion on the analysis followed by the conclusion.

2. Theoretical framework

A major problem when discussing multiple languages becomes how to define concepts. What is the difference between a first language (L1), native language and a mother tongue? Should languages be ranked according to the proficiency of the language or the order of acquirement, as these are not necessarily the same order for an individual. Mother tongue and the First language are often considered to be synonymous, yet after years of instruction in an institution the L2 can become the language the individual is more proficient in and even replace the L1 to a degree where the individual loses their ability to speak the language. Despite this the emotional connection to the languages can be different. This paper will exclude terminology such as native language, which can take several different meanings depending on the user, as well as minimise the use of mother tongue. This paper will mostly refer to a L1 without the assumption that the L1 is the strongest language or the only language the user is capable of using, with L1 the meaning the first language the individual has acquired.

The literature presented in the following section moves from theoretical perspectives on learning to an exploration of multilingualism through more sociological presentation of general outcomes in learning English through a foreign language to finally a presentation of the societal level of learning English.

2.1 Towards sociocultural theory

Central to modern learning approaches Hoare (2006) argues is that one must pay attention to the theory of self, the idea being that one's image of oneself could affect learning in a significant way. An example of this can be seen in the case of sexist views of women and their abilities, whereby in this case women sensitive to stereotypes against them tend to underperform (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). Hoare (2006) particularly notes the difference between the modernist and post-modernist views on the self as in a post-modern world the idea of the self is connected to the individual's life experiences and their personal cause as opposed to the modernist self which was more focused on self-betterment. Tennant

(2006) argues that the idea of self-learning is a learning theory in itself to be criticised though does concede that there are crucially important things in the theory to be explored. Tennant (2006) speaks of the idea of “individual-society dualism” whereby on an individual level, adults are critical problem-oriented learners and need a reason for why they are learning something rather than a child’s subject-centred approach to learning. Tennant (2006) however critiques problem-oriented learning for being a much too naïve an idea as it leaves out the societal aspect of life, but his idea that society completely dominates the individual and their choices, the society part of the dualism, is far too pessimistic to be useful. The sociocultural theory placed to aid this issue by Hoare (2006) does have its place in the discussion of the subject. Learning does not occur in a vacuum and the social implications to what is being learnt and why is an important one, as is the ability to reflect on what has been learnt and why it could be useful to the individual, the question remaining is to what extent does this happen?

According to the post-structuralist approach to language learning, culture depends on who experiences something, and when, an approach which has been named the sociocultural approach to learning (Kramsch, Ginsberg, & De Bot 1991). Especially with multiculturalism becoming more of the norm, cultural experiences are unique, yet at the same time students are interacting with a teacher, who comes with some type of cultural interpretation to the language that they will convey to the students whether consciously or unconsciously. The sociocultural approach lends its roots from Vygotsky’s theory of learning, as he saw that learning happens in a social environment in relationship with the physiological, social and cultural aspects of the individual that make up their thinking (Swain, Steinman, & Kinnear, 2011). Vygotsky’s view especially emphasises that through the use of language an individual is taking part in the culture both as a consumer of the old as well as a creator of something new. This part has the most bearing in language learning as this means that already at its base a language classroom has interactions with two or more cultures as well as a culture of its own (Kim & Yoon, 2012). Through the sociocultural perspective of language learning, beyond neural development, on an individual learner develops as they bring their own linguistic and cultural background to a specific context, which has its own history, and the learner and context engage with a language as it is presented in conjunction with various actors (Swain, Steinman & Kinnear, 2011). On a classroom level learning happens though “many modes of conversation through which teacher and students dialogically make sense of topics of individual and social significance, through action, knowledge building and

reflection” (Wells, 1999 p.98). With language itself being taken to the individual level, the aim of language learning becomes more unclear. Especially in the case of English which as a language is used in many countries with cultures of their own, what is the English that should be taught in a non-anglophone country? Kramsch (2015) questions whether teaching of foreign languages is misguided in its aims as well as should a foreign language learning be focused on getting the learner to a monolingual’s level, or rather to a level where they can competently use it and thrive in an environment they mean to use this language in. Questioning this however brings about new problems, and then one must define what the new goal should be as well as how should one measure this and be able to teach it as well.

2.2 Multilingualism

How does multilingualism come in to play then when learning? Do the different language learning systems support each other? In the case of phonology, Wrembel and Mickiewicz (2012) found that both L1 Polish and L2 French influenced the pronunciation of L3 English no matter how proficient the speaker, though the subject has not been studied enough to make any generalisations. Jaensch (2012) found that in adults who were more proficient in an L2 were also able to advance faster in an L3. Both studies show that adults are able to transfer the knowledge from the previously learnt L2. Whether L1 is used more than the L2 in language learning has been a recent area of study in the field, as the Cumulative - Enhancement Model seeks to prove that learners utilise all the languages they have learnt when learning a new one. Flynn et al. (2004) conducted a study on the subject which seems to corroborate these findings whereby Kazakhs who had learnt Russian before learning English were able to draw upon Russian grammatical similarities to English to aid their learning. This does also indicate that what language has been learnt beforehand matters, as learning a relative language to the previously known languages will be much easier than a language from a foreign group. This all shows that a student learning a language in possession of multiple languages will draw on all previous knowledge in their attempt to learn yet another language, and this will also be the case in a classroom where teaching does not happen in the students’ L1.

How about the influence of the first language? If a certain proficiency in an L1 then has been achieved, does it have any more of an importance other than a secure base for learning a new language? Backing up the importance of the first language, Nation (2001) writes so about discussing a subject in the L1 before writing and assignment in L2:

As a result, the learners who did the preparatory L1 discussion in groups did much better on the L2 written task than other learners who did preparatory L2 discussion even though that discussion was in the same language as the subsequent written task. There is thus a useful role for the L1 in helping learners gain the knowledge needed to reach a higher level of L2 performance. Whenever a teacher feels that a meaning based L2 task might be beyond the capabilities of the learners, a small amount of L1 discussion can help overcome some of the obstacles. (p. 3)

He (2001) specifically argues, that using L1 will speed up the understanding of the content that is being handled, and that it can help understand vocabulary of L2 better as well, much in the same way that pictures can. Due to this efficiency in communication, Nation (2001) calls the omission of L1 in a language classroom as “foolish”. Cenoz et al. (1998) too highlighted the importance of the first language in learning languages: “Development of the child's first language, with its related cognitive development, is more important in promoting second and third language development than mere length of exposure to these later acquired languages”, and that there was a difference in how the language was learned depending on how many languages the child had learned beforehand. The difference in learning they attributed to the concept of transfer, where knowledge gained learning the previous languages aided the learning of a new one.

Understanding the importance of L1 in learning, there is a great task for teachers to understand how they can help their students to learn best in bilingual and multilingual conditions (Creese, 2005). In addition to simply knowing how second language acquisitions happen, they must know how students can apply their knowledge and give them these opportunities as well as know what kinds of cultures and linguistic backgrounds they have that could be affecting language acquisition (Creese 2005). This then means that when a student is learning a foreign language in a foreign language, they will have the advantages brought on by transfer of a language they have previously learnt in their new language studies, however they are at a disadvantage as they cannot formulate thoughts in their L1 to organise what they have learnt in a more efficient manner.

In case studies on the subject of multilingualism there is an emphasis in the importance of being able to use the L1 of the individual when learning, possibly for increasing understanding in the subject, and also to be able to utilise the previous knowledge of the pupil and increase transfer of knowledge. These cases tend to happen either amongst immigrant populations in a school, or indigenous populations where the L1 of the students is not the majority language of the population (Sarkar &Lavoie, 2013, Adamson, & Feng ,2013, Goldstein, 2003).

An integral part of any model in teaching foreign language then seems to be that students are given the opportunity to use their L1 for learning as well as to foster the growth of their identities. Sarkar &Lavoie (2013) note that in teaching indigenous languages, whilst an immersion model works in promoting the indigenous language of the area, the students do not acquire a proficiency in the dominant languages needed to survive in the dominant cultures. Because of this lack in proficiency the researchers promote the idea of a bilingual mode of teaching where all classrooms use two languages as modes of instruction so that students can make use of both languages as support when though the researchers do note that the level to which each language would be used in the classroom would depend on what the dominant language in the community is learning (Sarkar &Lavoie, 2013). This is because when speakers of the minority language are not prevalent in the area, the minority language should be used more than the dominant language in the classroom to allow students to acquire a greater proficiency in the minority language before being introduced other languages (Sarkar &Lavoie 2013). What makes this discussion interesting is that depending on the research Canadian students will have to learn both English and French in the classroom, and in the case of indigenous students the aim is to promote students becoming trilingual. The challenge then is to turn a bilingual model into a trilingual model where a third languages is introduced at some point in the curriculum. This method however seems to be the least efficient in producing trilingual individuals, the more efficient way being that a student goes to a school in the third language and uses both the indigenous language and the dominant language of the area in the community regularly (Sarkar &Lavoie 2013). The burden of making sure students are exposed to all the languages is slightly taken off of the institutions this way, though it is not explicitly mentioned whether students at the institution

are still using all of the languages to some capacity during teaching or not (Sarkar & Lavoie 2013).

Adamson, & Feng, (2013) looked at the performance of students in the Republic of China for whom the L1 is not Chinese. This study proposes at four models in which the students learn languages: the Accretive Model, the Balanced Model, the Transitional Model and the Depreciative model. In the Accretive Model of Adamson & Feng (2013) both the minority language as well as Chinese are equally taught in the institution so that students then have the chance to gain competence in both L2 Chinese as well as L3 English whilst being able to maintain an identity in their L. The Balanced Model English is taught in such a manner that though the minority language does not have a status whereby subjects are being taught in this language, students are able to find help in their L1 for instruction of any difficult points, and thus especially already bilingual students are able to excel in this environment. In the Transitional Model Chinese is the medium for instruction, but students are able to gain support from a large number of peers whose L1 is the same and in the Depreciative Model the students do not receive any support in their L1 and it is not taught in the school resulting in students even losing their L1 and the part of their ethnic identity it represented, and can also often lag behind other members of the class in terms of academic performance (Adamson & Feng, 2013). Once again it is evident that L1 is important for learning an L3, though these studies do not provide the specific parameters of how this should happen.

These models however view language learning only as maximising the amount of time a student spends in a single language environment, rather than looking the quality and type of teaching as well as the mechanisms a student will use to learn the language. Though the last method listed by Sarkar & Lavoie, (2013) has the student spending time using all the languages, the student will have the burden of learning to manoeuvre the different language environments alone, with the exception of the academic one. This method also does not take into account whether the student will be able to use the L1 for language learning in the institution, and the use of the other dominant language is also left to be learnt through social interactions, which though how the L1 is learnt, means that it will only reach the level required for the specific social interactions. Adamson & Feng's (2013) study would indicate that allowing the L1 for processing is necessary for language learning no matter what the

structure of the school itself. To a degree then this is in opposition of the other presented models.

A big problem inside a multilingual classroom is that teachers often do not have the proper tools to navigate this multicultural learning environment. Adamson and Feng (2013) note how as English is linguistically distant from both Mandarin Chinese and languages of minorities and the difficulties in learning English due to higher cognitive demands result in many minority language speakers dropping out with low performance rates compared to the rest of the population. But how does one rectify this situation? This similar occurrence is found in a case study in the work by De Mejía and Hélot (2008) where immigrant students struggle to learn Irish as they are not yet competent English speakers, and thus have difficulty understanding the lesson. Because teachers do not know what to do to help students whose L1 is not the majority language, the easiest way is to rely on the expectation that the students will catch up eventually on their own to the rest of the class. One such example in the study by De Mejía & Hélot (2008) is of immigrant students in a Catalan school where some teachers, no matter what the level of their English, will use English as the lingua franca with foreign students because of their varied backgrounds and the need to clarify points. These teachers however will not formally teach the students any English language or culture in English class as the teachers assume the students in all likelihood will not need English in their future (De Mejía & Hélot, 2008). The English class in the study was conducted in English, Spanish and Catalan despite the Catalan only policy of the school. De Mejía & Hélot (2008) report that due to these policies the English classes focused instead on content, and the skill levels of the immigrant students were never tested so that the level of English taught would match those of the students. In addition to this immigrant students were often also exempt from classes as the assumption was that another additional language that the students would have to learn would mix them up. Though the students will quickly pick up both Spanish and Catalan being immersed in the languages constantly, their level of English will have a much smaller chance of reaching the level of their peers, and thus are in ways also unequal to them, especially if they do not go to English classes at all, and ironically as De Mejía & Hélot (2008) point out, it is the one class where they would be on the same level as their peers as they too are learning a foreign language. Learning a new language in an L2 is tough, but it is even tougher if one is not even given a proper chance to learn at all.

The use of the L1 in the classroom is most effectively been used as a tool to advance learning as Goldstein (2003) recounts the experiences of Cantonese speaking students as they learn mathematics and how the teacher allows students to use their L1 in learning. Though mathematics is not a language in the traditional sense, the elements of learning grammar and applying it when constructing a sentence could be compared to mathematics on some level. The simplest method to use the L1 was being able to discuss the topics of the lesson in class with peers and possibly use that to discuss the same subject with the teacher. In the case of Goldstein (2003) students used Cantonese to discuss a problem amongst themselves or to ask the teacher who spoke Cantonese why she had given the mark she gave as they had more confidence to do it in their L1, as well as to just ask for the teacher to re-explain something in Cantonese because they did not understand what was being said in English. In another case, a student studying English in Breton was able to use the similarities between German and English to his advantage, which demonstrates the advantage of language transfer (Jessner & Kramsch, 2015).

Classrooms with students from different backgrounds also encounter problems due to the students' L1 having certain limitations. Gopar (2016) notes how some indigenous peoples do not have a writing system and students get to create these themselves based on what they have learned in the classroom as they translate English they are learning in their Spanish school. Doing this can help students note the similarities between the languages they use in the classroom increasing useful transfer in the learning as well as to help build their relationship with their L1 by sharing their culture with the class and creating methodology for written communication. Gopar (2016) also mentions how students from different indigenous groups start to notice similarities with each other's languages as well as they try to find words for fruit, building on how this method of teaching becomes not only efficient in building cultural identity, but also facilitates cultural exchange and promotes positive connotations with the L1. Being aware of one's own language in this way also increases understanding in the content of the class through the L1 and thus is useful for the end goal of L3 learning. Another similar incident Gopar (2016) notes is how Mexican immigrants in the United States will use the way of writing that they are already familiar with to learn and write English in the way that it is pronounced and how this method is also used by indigenous peoples who

learn English as well, as this method enables them to remember what they have learned with more ease. This example too demonstrates the use of the L1 in an attempt to make the unfamiliar patterns in the L2 or L3 more recognisable.

2.3 Societal level

Attitudes towards language learning have an impact on motivation to learn a language and link to the idea of having to reflect one's own learning as the process advances. Fuligni (1997) states that first and second-generation immigrant families in general emphasise the importance of education, most likely stemming from a wish to advance in society and education being a vehicle to achieving these dreams. Assuming emphasis on education includes learning languages, a general societal positive attitude towards learning a new language will be an asset in learning one. Mirroring off the sociocultural theory, it would not be inconceivable to assume that immigrant communities, who are most often placed in the situation of learning a new language whilst being taught it in another one, will develop their own attitudes towards education and learning languages, as learning a new language means access to wider society in the new country. At the same time all languages already in possession of the individual will change due to the new surroundings and the consequent changes that may follow. Gogolin (2002) speaks of immigrant languages and changes within them:

The observation of linguistic development in immigrant communities shows that the language of the majority does gain in importance for them and is frequently used, but at the same time and without contradiction the inherited language does not at all lose its relevance for them. Indeed, the functions and practices of language use change in minority situations, and furthermore the minority languages are liable to changes in which the traces of the surrounding majority language can be observed.
(Gogolin 2002 p. 13)

Gogolin (2002) goes on to say that in Germany, English has an important role as a language as it is an important language in pop culture, and sees it as the second most important foreign language for an immigrant to know after the dominant language of the country they live in. There may be a case made for motivation being linked with the utilitarian value of the language that is being learnt. This is seen in the way learning English is presented by Crystal

(2003) whereby English is becoming a global language and thus the aim of learning the language has shifted in this sense as well as ownership of the language is “removed” from the anglophone countries to an extent. This links to English as a lingua franca (ELF) becoming a method to gain access to information in fields such as the sciences, online as well as other media as these areas are dominated in English language publishing (Crystal, 2003). When moving into learning English in a country where it is not the major language this is important as the aims of the learners may be more motivated by gaining access to these things rather than American or Australian cultures.

Part of the distinction between associations with the languages that are being used by the individual link to how the L1 is put forward as a “refuge” or something familiar to use when using the dominant language becomes too tiresome. Children in a Breton school used French to separate themselves from the academic environment momentarily as well as played with all the languages they knew to create their own space with the in group who knew all the same languages (Jessner & Kramsch 2015). Especially if an environment prohibits the use of an individuals’ L1 for educational or institutional reasons, the association between languages may develop in such a manner that the L1 becomes synonymous with leisure and freedom and the L2 with work. Thus, there is a question to be posed with whether such rules should be placed, especially considering the other benefits of L1 use in a classroom.

An important factor relating to motivation and different associations to different languages is to the history of the area, as in cases where the language spoken by indigenous or minority peoples has been shunned by the dominant culture will affect the attitudes of the individual, and thus being able to use the language in a classroom helps legitimise it and remove shame. In the case of Gopar (2016) students being promoted to utilise their L1 by the institutions that are the dominant culture means that the utilisation of the L1 as a legitimate tool can increase the motivation to use it, and possibly through this have a positive influence in language learning as well as promote group cohesion.

Promoting the use of an L1 does not come without creating its own problems. In Goldstein (2003) where the teacher was also a speaker of Cantonese, the ability to use the L1 is a good tool to advance the learners skills and even bring cohesion to the group, however the case

study also recounts how a Euro-Canadian student born in Russia felt that she was being excluded as she could not get the same level of assistance as the other minority group in the classroom. Students might also feel that there is a certain in-group being made as speakers of one language come together to solve a problem leaving all who do not understand outside. Such problems may be possible to solve in such a way that this tool could still remain in use. Perhaps one such solution could come from the same study, where Goldstein (2003) talks about how students from different backgrounds talking in English code switch to Mandarin to explain the jokes they are telling each other as a couple of students took the mantle of “language broker” in the group to allow all members to participate. In this manner the classroom can achieve a new level of cohesion which can be useful in situations where peer learning is being used as a learning tool in addition to simply having a more relaxed atmosphere between the students. Another risk is that the minority group is not accepting of the use of the L2 due to the institutional connotations as well. In Goldstein (2003), the Cantonese students would not speak English with each other because speaking English was seen as showing off and trying to place oneself above other community members and thus was very rude. An English only policy in this classroom eliminated this issue for the students as the reason to speak English by individuals came from outside themselves, however Goldstein remarks that this does not increase the motivation to speak English, and thus students may instead opt to be silent instead. This is a difficult balance to find, “[t]he use of Cantonese to seek and maintain friendships within the Cantonese speaking community at Northside can be understood as a survival or coping strategy” (Goldstein 2003 p. 15). It is likely that students without the support network that helps as a protective factor in stress would not succeed as well as those with the support network despite the possible hindrances in language learning.

Through the various studies we can observe how getting to use the L1 in foreign language learning is very valuable in cases such as these as it helps the learner build a base to fully comprehend the language they are learning. The L1 can help them connect with the teacher, elaborate on the subject matter they are learning as well as to build communities and connect with peers who have a similar background to them. Lastly, use of the L1 in the classroom does pose the risk of students creating linguistic in-groups which do need to be addressed by the teacher, though in situations where the use of the L1 is shunned by the community, being able to use the language in a classroom can give a great boost of confidence.

One important aspect to note through this literature review is the lack of studies that would discuss the subject in a more concrete manner which consequently means that this literary review was not able to explore many facets of the phenomenon. The importance of L1 use in language learning has been noted, but large-scale studies looking at how to proceed in a situation where there is an absence of a teacher who could provide L1 support, and what other strategies could be used to address problems that occur are needed. Further analysis should also be done in simply identifying the problems that students face in these situations rather than simply stating that the situation is problematic. What are the strategies that students should be using to increase comprehension of the subject matter? How does an individual process a foreign language in a foreign language? Could technology be implemented in a strategic manner to facilitate learning in these situations? There are several questions that merit research and discussion on the subject going forward.

The situation is especially more complex when a classroom is made up of only students who do not speak the language used for instruction and might even be the only representatives of the specific L1 in the classroom. The subject should thus be studied from various angles including that of a single student, a minority group in the classroom as well as that of a teacher trying to instruct students in these kinds of classrooms. Other variables would include the age of the learner, as a single young child with this background will learn the language of instruction faster than an adult. Like in the case of grammar, are adults more capable of applying knowledge of previous languages in their further language learning? Is this something that should be promoted in adult foreign language learning? What about the attitudes regarding learning multiple languages at a time?

Beyond these points, other important points of study are learner identity and the identity of a multilingual speaker. What level of proficiency do learners expect to achieve? What are their attitudes towards the target language? Are they concerned with phenomena like L1 loss and does this affect their motivation in language learning? If an adult learner does not have previous experience in formal language learning, what emotions, conflicts or motivational effects do these situations create?

There is a lot to be studied yet in this area as the world becomes increasingly multicultural and the appearance of students whose L1 is not the instruction language becomes more common. My aim is thus to investigate the phenomenon of language learning, specifically of English, and how it happens in a foreign language by beginning to map out the various aspects at play that affect students in this learning environment. I endeavour to give an answer to some of the questions written above from the point of view of the students participating in this case study.

3. Research approach

Based on a seminar paper I had done before on almost the same subject, I sent a message to my contact inquiring whether her students would be willing to join an interview to further elaborate on what I had studied before. This contact is an English teacher, who teaches immigrants in Finland English using the Finnish language. After this I arranged a time with her to go do the interview with the students. The interview was a semi-structured group interview based on some questions I had written beforehand which were reviewed by a supervisor ahead of the interview, but as the interview was semi-structured this plan was deviated from as answers prompted further questions or clarifications on a subject. I briefed all the students before the interview on what I would be asking, that they could leave at any time, and that they could respond in either Finnish or English depending on what would feel most comfortable. A Finnish student, who was also a member of the English course, was present for the interview as per request of the immigrant students for added comfort. All student received a consent form which they signed. The interview was recorded in the English classroom on a mobile device on a table around which the students sat. One of the students left for a short duration of the interview and a teacher came into the classroom to hand out homework near the end. The interview questions were repeated first in Finnish, and then in English, as most students seemed to understand Finnish slightly better. In responses to the questions given in Finnish, the translation from Finnish to English is provided by myself.

A major limitation of the interview was language, as some were more comfortable with Finnish and others with English, and I did not speak Persian. Some of the students were able to translate questions, however this did not aid in the limitation of non-native level language skills.

The six students interviewed are all immigrants doing tenth grade level courses which will equip them for high school or polytechnic -level studies. The students were all either Dari speakers save for one who was a Farsi speaker. One was a woman and the rest were male. The students did not come from similar backgrounds in English studies nor were they on the same level of proficiency, as shown by some preferring to respond in English and others in Finnish.

Their accurate age to me is unknown, however all claim to be adults. A rough estimate of age is between 18 to 30 years of age.

Pseudo name	Gender	L1	Years spent in Finland at time of interview
Dalia	Female	Dari	2
Binyamin	Male	Dari	2
Yazan	Male	Dari	2
Ibrahim	Male	Persian/Farsi	2
Ali	Male	Dari	2
Gabriel	Male	Dari	2

Table 1. A list of all the participants, their gender, mother tongue and time spent in Finland at the time that the interview took place.

The chosen method for analysis was thematic analysis as outlined by Willig (2013). The first step according to Willig (2013) is coding. Coding happens though familiarizing with the data by reading and re-reading the text several times, after which the text is worked through line-by-line, in order to identify meaning units, and labelling these with a code that captures the meaning identified. The inductive analysis method of coding tries simply to capture the meaning contained within the segment and the coding frame itself emerges from the data (Willig, 2013). Codes attempt to describe the data and the same segment can contain several codes. These codes are tuned into themes. Themes are a higher level of analysis as they contain the meaning of several codes in relation to the research question (Willig, 2013). Willig 2013 writes that a researcher may have criteria based on the research question that help create themes that relate to the question as well as help explain the meaning of what was said by the participants.

Using this method, I familiarised myself with the data. It had been a year since the data collection and transcription, and thus though I was familiar with the contents of the interview, I had gain more in-depth understanding of the data. One year's break from the data meant that I had more distance from the data in a way that would aid in gaining a less biased view of the data. As I listened and read the transcript, I began to list possible codes. Once I had reached about 25 codes, I read the text applying these codes to the text. If more codes

emerged from the data, I added them to the list and applied these codes as well. By the end of this process there were 36 codes. These codes were grouped into eight themes.

4. Analysis

The aim of the analysis is to delineate how students in this classroom where teaching English happens through Finnish are able to learn. This includes identifying sources of motivation, methods of communication and interaction as well as strategies used to aid learning English especially when these involve linguistic or cultural aspects.

Through the use of thematic analysis, I divided the data into eight themes:

1. The Aim of Learning English
2. Types of Learning
3. Communication in the classroom
4. The Classroom and Motivation
5. Structure
6. Language Exchange
7. Translation as a Tool For learning
8. Language loss

These themes flow from looking at the aim of learning, to how this aim is learnt in practice, from where the inspection of the phenomenon is taken to the classroom level in both communication and the various aspects within that affect motivation. The last half looks at language learning from a more content basis where the themes involve looking at the study of grammar and vocabulary as well as language loss and translation as a tool of study. Thus in this thesis the themes are divided into two sections under the heading of “Multilingualism” and “Community level” reflecting the division in the theoretical framework.

4.1 Community level

This part of the analysis focuses on how the classroom is organised. This includes the aim of the students for learning relating to English as a lingua franca, the types of leaning students engage in, classroom communication though various languages and how the classroom related to motivation in language learning.

4.1.1 The aim of learning English

Throughout the interview it became clear that one of the main reasons to study English was its utility as the lingua franca in Finland as well as abroad, in the media, and in academia. English is seen by the students as a tool they will be able to use to connect themselves with people across different countries, similar to the findings of Gogolin (2002) of immigrants in Germany valuing English. Seeing this as the goal for students in the classroom is important as this is part of the question of what the goal of language teaching is. Traditionally a language classroom strives for the authentic version of the language, but Kramsch (2015) writes about authenticity: “In all cases, what is sought is authenticity: authentic standard language practices of the world’s educated elites on the one hand, authentic hybrid language practices of the world’s global youth on the other. However, to paraphrase Bourdieu, linguistic and cultural authenticity is never a guarantee of social acceptability” (p. 88). Especially when a learner’s goal is to be able to converse in a possibly non- Anglophone country, and as these students speak of Finland being outside of Europe in a similar manner that people from the United Kingdom stereotypically speak of their country, attempting to speak “authentic” English, whatever this may be, may easily miss the mark as a goal.

The goal of learning English is crystallised into seeing it as a utility in travel, education and the media:

- 1) Dalia: koska se on kansainvälinen kieli, jos haluat matkustaa johonkin voi, jos mää en ymmärrä saksan kieli tai ruotsin kieli mutta voit keskustella englannin kieli, se on kaunis kieli mutta myös vaikea

(Dalia: because it is an international language, if you want to travel somewhere, if I do not understand the German language or the Swedish language but you can converse in the English language, it is a beautiful language but also difficult)
- 2) Yazan: I like English language is international if I learn or if I can speak English I can use it anywhere in the world so just English language can help me when I travel to another country that I can’t my mother language can’t help me so just if I learn or if I can speak English it can help me so that why I like.

- 3) Yazan: When I was in Afghanistan I started English in there, so when I started the English language and I like the way the way of speaking the way of pronunciation and the way of reading English language and my friends and my teachers they said that English is so necessary because it is international language when if you learn English you can use it in any country in the world so I in that time that when I saw movies and I dream that I can speak like them so but it not possible but I have learnt many words and good

Many of the statements were similar to this in that English as a lingua franca is seen as a utility in travel, for Dalia (example 1) it is in travelling in Europe and not speaking the languages, for Yazan (example 2) his motivations are the same but travelling on a global scale and he attributes the acquisition of this view to what his teachers and friends have said about learning English (example 3). Crystal (2003) writes on travel “[i]f there is a contemporary movement towards world English use, therefore, we would expect it to be particularly noticeable in this domain. And so it is.” (p.104) The students being immigrants, some have travelled extremely tough journeys to get to Finland, and thus it is hardly surprising that they would have noted the need for a lingua franca. Curiously none of the stated reasons to study English according to the students were because the students wished to engage in anglophone cultures. A possible reason for this is that students’ efforts are more focused on Finland and Finnish culture over Anglophone ones. Another possible perspective is that as immigrants their perspective of language through their experiences are much more focused on language use as a tool for communication required for survival as opposed to an artistic exploration of culture. This is reflected in Gabriel’s mention of ELF usage going to the supermarket:

- 4) Gabriel: Englanti on tärkeä, ilman sitä on vaikea elää esimerkiksi Euroopassa, Euroopassa paljon käyttävät englantia ja jos et osaa englantia se on vaikea matkustaa, ja esimerkiksi jos haluat mennä kauppaan ostaa jotain pitäisi lukea se, se on, joo...

(Gabriel: English is important, without it it is difficult to live for example in Europe, in Europe they use a lot of English and if you do not know any English it is difficult to travel, for example if you want to go to the stores somewhere you have to read it, it is, yes...)

Gabriel’s point is similar to Dalia’s and Yazan’s points of view (examples 1, 2, and 3) in that English gives the user access to information in a foreign country they would not otherwise have access to, however Gabriel takes it to a more situation specific place of shopping for

food. English as a lingua franca is thus a way to access very basic everyday information such as the food labels in a supermarket where this translates to the need of language for acquisition of food and thus the need of language being in its fostering survival in a foreign country.

In addition to basic necessities, English is seen as useful in order to gain information that is not as accessible in other languages especially in technology and the academic environment as a lot of the international spaces for information such as the internet are in English (Crystal, 2003). English then is an integral part of accessing the informational highways and links to English being a utility that students wish to access.

- 5) Binyamin: I like English language and I like studying English and English is an international language and I want to learn English because I want to understand the system of the worlds and when I learn English language I can speak with all people of the worlds in every county and every kind of peoples and I can make my life easy when I learn English, and this is so important for me because nowadays the system is in English all computers all technology and nowadays we have to learn English language if we have to live and success for life.
- 6) Ibrahim: also they all mentioned two thing to points that its international language and that it's the language of technology nowadays and also for me it was also easy and it was near to my mother language Dari the grammar and the vocabularies are the same, meaning, it helps to learn fast and maybe also when you contact with people you can the more information also in English you can find the information nowadays so when you got to university you need in many science you need it all the time. So in that bit.

Both statements (examples 5 and 6) involve English being the key to accessing information on a global scale, for Binyamin it is that technological advancements and information highways are in English and for Ibrahim it is that English is often a requirement in universities as research is being done in English. Here the idea is linked to technology and being able to access technological resources. Di Bitetti & Ferreras (2017) confirm on English in relation to scientific progress that English indeed has had a huge impact on scientific and technological advancement as most papers are written in English, and thus these students' feeling that they need to learn English in order to be able have access is not a misguided one. Once again English becomes a utility in order to engage in something greater than the language itself. In referencing English and university, the need for English shows a will to

advance in life, to a higher social level, the access to which requires a certain knowledge of English. Thus, English is a tool for survival on a social scale as well reflective of the findings of Fuligni (1997) on immigrant attitudes on learning. An interesting point is that for Ibrahim (example 6), contrary to the case of Dalia (example 1), learning English is seen as something fairly easy, and thus the information gained is more like a perk that can be gained easily, whereas for Dalia English as a lingua franca is something she wants for easy travel and thus whilst learning English is difficult it is something she is willing to put up with for attaining her goal.

Moving from ELF as a utility for survival to the communication centred goal, though the students cite their communicative aim as being able to speak ELF, the aim in communication may be related to presentation of self.

- 7) Yazan: when I saw movies and I dream that I can speak like them so but it not possible but I have learnt many words and good

Yazan links the English language to the images portrayed to him in the media and connects the English language to an image of a communicator that he himself would like to be. Media has an effect on what an individual may view perfect communication looks like, but it is up to the learner whether they wish to pursue this. English is then a tool for the acquisition of what he is being presented in the media.

Like in ELF as a utility, communication may also involve noting that there is a need for a skill, an observation which gives a learner a more tangible aim as reflective of the theory of self which was mentioned previously on adult learning being more goal oriented (Hoare 2006). This is the most common in adult learning, and these students recount such experiences like in the case of Ali:

- 8) Ali: on on, vain se on vähän vaikea kun suomalaiset eniten he puhuvat englannin kieli ja meillä ei tule semmoisen harjoitus että voimme puhua ja siksi että emme voi unohtaa. Mutta nyt kun haluan puhua englanniksi pelkään vähän ja sanoa, joskus en voi sanoa yhtään mitään eikä kukaan ymmärrä. On uusia maahanmuuttajia vain halusin eilen sanoa heille yksi lause se kesti ehkä kolme minuuttia, sen jälkeen he eivät ymmärtäneet tulin takaisin.

(Ali: yes yes, only it is a little difficult when the Finns the most they speak English and we do not get this kind of practice that we could talk and so that we cannot forget.

But now when I want to speak in English I am a little afraid to speak, sometimes I cannot say anything and nobody understands. There are new immigrants and I just wanted to say a single sentence and it took maybe three minutes, when they did not understand I returned.)

In example 7 Ali expresses that before speaking Finnish he had the chance to use English a lot as that was the language that Finns would speak to him, however now that he is able to speak Finnish he has lost much of his ability to speak in English and thus when he met new immigrants with whom the lingua franca was English, he was not able to communicate with them. Though the experience is a negative one, Ali demonstrates how he feels he should be able to use the language in his immediate surroundings as a means of communication between another group of people as a lingua franca. Though Ali is now able to communicate to the majority of the population in Finland, he is no longer able to communicate to the minority in a satisfactory manner. Ibrahim reports a similar experience:

- 9) Ibrahim: we always try to speak with people and also its was my negative when I get far from English language I have forgotten many grammar many words and also it affect on my speaking and understanding comprehension and many ways it affected, that's it

Ibrahim saying “we always try to speak” also reflects that he seeks out opportunities to use his skill in a manner that Ali (example 7) described attempting to use English. This type is not survivalist in the manner many of the other examples are, showing that the aim of learning ELF is has also exploratory elements in it for these participants as well as a method of communicating to people in their surroundings that they could not otherwise communicate with.

4.1.2 Types of learning

Next we shall move from the reason to study English to methods of its acquisition in terms of learning types. Learning English happens in many places and may be divided into many different kinds of groupings for study. Kramsch, Ginsberg and De Bot (1991) discuss definitions of various learning environments stating that there is no one way to define a learning environment as how an environment is divided can range from settings and

discourse to what kind of people or materials are available. The only commonality in all environments is that “[t]hey are always interactional, in that they elicit or facilitate learning through interaction with the learner” (Kramsch, Ginsberg & De Bot, 1991 p. 177) The participants discussed many of these similar instances though the interview, and this section is divided into two halves, one on the attitudes and views the students had on learning and how it should happen, and the second half on the various types of learning that they indicated of partaking in themselves as divided based on the partakers in the learning process. An integral part of this is the history of each student and how this affects both the attitude as well as the current situations.

The students were very aware of the fact that they were leaning a great amount of the curriculum in a short amount of time which affected their understanding of how their current learning process was happening and whether it matched their ideal method of learning. Thus, though they wished they could go more slowly, they were aware they could not:

10) Ali: mutta meillä ei ole aikaa siksi vain kolme vuotta me opiskelemme yhtä vuotta ja siksi se menee vähän nopeasti ja opettajakin ei ehdi joskus me haastattelemmme ja puhumme toiselle ja sekin on opettaja pitää huolia kaikkia että kun hän opettaa jotakin hän ei voi istua siinä ja sanoa tehkää vain opettajan pitää tulee hiukan joo ja kysyä miten sinulla menee ja ymmärrätkö tai ei kun opettaja ei tule ja minäkin en ymmärrä sen asia sekin voi tulla minulla vaikeaksi ja sen jälkeen sanoa että en halua jatkaa enään

(Ali: but we do not have time because only three years we study one and thus it goes a bit quickly and the teacher too does not have time, sometimes we interview and talk to another and that is the teacher as to worry all that when she teaches something she cannot sit these and say do, only the teacher needs to come and yes and ask how are you and do you understand or not and when the teacher does not come and I too do not understand the thing that too can become difficult and after that say that I don't want to continue)

The speed at which the students had to learn was viewed as a problem because the students felt that they did not have the time that was needed to ensure that they learnt everything that needed to be learnt. Ibrahim speaks of quality and quantity of teaching during the interview which as a sentiment is also reflected in the latter part of Ali's comment in example 10 on engagement with the teacher as there is not enough time to ensure quality due to the quantity of material to be studied. Indeed, a major influencer in what students saw as making up

quality in teaching was feedback from the teacher as well as that teaching would happen according to the level of each student:

- 11) Yazan: and also you have to, when we teach a student we know that which level they are according to in English, how many word they can use English and also to tell them se on hyvä and what, jos ei ole se häiritsee, disturbs us
(se on hyvä= it is good
jos ei ole se häiritsee= if it is not it disturbs)

Yazan uses a fairly strong word in *häiritsee* (disturbing) and *disturb* for the effects of a lack in teacher feedback as disturbance implies that no regular feedback from a teacher completely impedes learning. This may be reflective of the learning situation being multilingual and students requiring more guidance due to the difficulty of the situation, or cultural where teachers have high status in theirs. Giving feedback is not difficult for teachers to give to the students and is something that should be regularly.

One of the things that students felt that they should have more of was conversation:

- 12) Dalia: mä tykkään että pitää, mä tykkää on olla keskustelua koska ihminen oppi puhumisesta mutta meillä ei ole luokassa mitään keskustelua vain opettaja kyllä opettaa ja keskustelu se vaikuttaa tosi paljon
(Dalia: I like that we should, I like to have conversation because people learn from talking but we do not have conversation in the classroom, the teacher just does teach and conversation had a great effect.)

Dalia in example 12 expresses that she wants to have conversation in the class because she feels that the “teacher teaching”, most likely meaning the review of content, is not enough. The students are not wrong to wish for more conversation as stated by Kramsch (2002), conversation has many beneficial effects on learning including feedback which the students felt as an important aspect in teaching. In Dalia’s case her wish for more conversation in class stems from previous experiences in language learning:

- 13) Dalia: esimerkki kun mä opiskelen englanniksi Iranissa siellä meillä oli viikossa kolme kertaa keskustelua ja meidän pitää- ja opettaja antaa meille joku aihe ja meidän pitää kirjoittaa joku lause tai joku teksti, mutta hän opettanut miten voi sanoa, keskustelu voi auttaa ja opettaja myös pitää kieltää emme voi puhua suomen kieltä tai

darin kieltä vain englanti kieltä opettaja itse pitää kieltä emme voi puhua suomen kieltä tai emme voi puhua Darinkieltä meidän pitää vain puhua englannin kieltä. Opettajan itse pitää puhua vain englanninkieltä.

(Dalia: for example when I study English in Iran there we had conversation three times a week and we had to- the teacher gave us a subject and we had to write a sentence or text, but he had taught us how we can say, conversation help and also we have to prohibit, we cannot speak the Finnish language or Dari language, only the English language, the teacher herself must prohibit we cannot speak the Finnish language or the Dari language we can only speak the English language. The teacher herself must only speak English.)

What is interesting about Dalia's words in example 13 is that from her previous experience she has also internalised the monolingual attitude towards language learning, seen in that she says that an English language teacher should only speak in English, which for example Levine (2010) considers a common myth in language learning that should no longer be perpetuated. There is a certain dissonance in relation to this view considering that all the students valued their L1 as a tool in learning foreign languages:

14) Binyamin: joo, if you know your mother language the you can explain everything easily in other languages when you words some points at the first you must understand in your mother language how can I explain this in mother language I always when I don't understand something I firstly try to understand in mother language then in other languages then in my opinion it's so necessary to remember out mother language because it help to explain better other languages

Dalia: olemme sama mieltä (we agree)

Ali: kaikki samaa mieltä (all agree)

Perhaps for Dalia being able to use the L1 in the classroom (example 13) is something that she should have the luxury of doing by herself rather than in the language classroom as her previous experience (example 13) showed that she did not use the L1 in her home country. Whatever the case, findings such as those of Goldstein (2003) show that there is a definite place for the L1 in a classroom.

Other than linguistic and structural language learning factors, the students felt that their language learning was impeded by everyday things such as phone usage as well outside disruptions:

15) Yazan: ikkuna häiritsee

Interviewer: miten?

Yazan: koska ihmiset kulkee aina sanoo terve

(yazan: the window is disturbing

Interviewer: how?

Yazan: because people passing by always say hello)

In this case Yazan explains that he has trouble concentrating on the lesson as sitting by the window he is being greeted by people passing by. The disturbance in this case is initiation of interaction from outside the classroom. Teaching thus must take into account the mundane in this environment the same way as any other classroom. In the case of the mobile phone the onus ends up being with the learner for, as will be discussed further in this paper, the mobile device is an important tool for learning in this particular classroom. As for the window, the solution lies with the classroom management of the teacher herself.

Students seemed to actively engage in at least the following types of learning interactions: peer learning, institutional learning, and autodidactic learning. These groupings are made by taking into consideration the people that are involved in learning for creating the divisions, where institutional learning involves a teacher and peers, peer learning is with mainly other fellow students and autodidactic learning is done by the student alone by themselves.

According to the interview, peer learning happened in the classroom as well as outside of it. Peer learning is significant as this type of learning can facilitate learning well assuming that factors such as quality feedback and a sufficient degree of collaboration are maintained. (Ballinger & Sato, 2016). In addition to conversation in the target language, an aspect that shall be discussed in the next chapter, peer learning happened in the classroom by students asking each other for advice on various activities such as checking if the translation was correct or when they did not know what the answer was:

16) Interviewer: sitten kun käytät kääntäjää niin kysytkö kaverilta että hei onko se varmasti tämä?

Ali: pitää kysyä kaverilta

(Interviewer: when you use the translator do you ask your friend if it was this?

Ali: I have to ask)

- 17) Ali: kun meille tulee joku ongelma mitä emme tiedä sen autamme toiselle, ja pyydämme apua että tiedätkö sen jos joku sanoo esimerkiksi Yazan ja mehdi män Binyamin kun he sanovat joo autamme toisella ja opiskelemme yhdessä se helpottaa ja kaikki tiedä ei kukaan voi tiedä sen kaikkea täydellisesti mutta voin me auttaa toiselle.

Interviewer: onko tämä luokassa?

Ali: joo kyllä,

Interviewer: että opettaja antaa kysyä?

Ali: joo

(Ali: when we have a problem that we do not know we help each other and ask for help that do you know it for if someone for example Yazan and Jusuf [män] Binyamin when they say yes we will help the other and study together is helps and everyone know nobody can know everything perfectly but we can help each other

Interviewer: is this in the classroom?

Ali: yes

Interviewer: and the teacher lets you ask?

Ali: yes)

In both cases (examples 16 and 17) where students double check facts or ask for answers, it is important to note that peer learning is happening most likely in the L1. The teacher letting the students freely engage in this kind of activity show trust from her that the students' foreign language interaction is focused on the task at hand. Being able to take in this type of interaction is supported by the study by Goldstein (2003) as both examples 16 and 17 show students using peer learning in the L1 to deepen their understanding of the material. In addition, the students reporting this as a resource shows that it is a regular and perhaps also integral part of their learning process within this classroom. Outside the classroom peer learning happened mostly as communication with other people in order to improve language skills:

- 18) Ali: puhun sen ihmisen kanssa englannin kielillä ja se oli tosi hyvä minulle mä selvitin kaikki asiat ja mitä minulla oli se oli tosi hyvä ja sen jälkeen kun mitä minä oppisin ennen englannin kielessä sen sama tulee suomen kieli ja silloin minulla se helpottaa ja auttaa

(Ali: I always spoke to the person in the English language and it was good for me I clarified many things and what I had it was very good, after that what I learn before English, the same came to Finnish and then for me it makes it easier and helps)

Ali explains here that when he used English regularly for interaction he worked himself on improving his English language skills. Overwhelmingly when students discussed their language learning it was mentioned in the context of learning languages in some type of institutional setting. One reflection of this was that when students discussed how long they had learnt English for they only mentioned how long they had learnt English in school for rather than including spaces of time they spent learning English by themselves. This is reflective of Ali who in the previous example (example 18) discusses his self-study of English in Finland, yet when he discusses his history of English, this period is listed by him as time he did not spend learning English:

19) Ali: Minä? Opiskelen kaksi vuotta sitten tai kolme vuotta sitten afganistanissa, joku [kuusissa?] ja ehkä opiskelin kuusi kuukaudeksi ja se oli toisi hyvä, sen kurssin miten se mene eteenpäin siellä on meillä joka päivä oli jotakin muuta tai joku päivä me opiskelemme sanat, joku toinen päivä me opiskelemme sen kielioppia, semmoisen, ja viikonloppuna meillä oli conversation, puhumme toiselle ja kysymme semmoisia ja koulussa opiskelen vähän englantia ja kaksi, kolme vuotta en opiskele mitään taas alkaa suomessa.

(Ali: Me? I studied two years or maybe four years in Afghanistan maybe [unclear] and maybe studied six months and it was very good, that course how it advanced there we had everyday something different like one day we studied words another day we studied grammar, like that, and weekends we had *conversation*, we talked to each other and asked there and at school I studied a little English and two, three years I do not study anything and again began in Finland.)

Here Ali lists when he studied English when asked specifically about when he studied English, and the time is limited to when he studied at school in Afghanistan and then reports not having studied English at all between going to an institution in Afghanistan and going to an institution in Finland. Out of the “two, three years” Ali does not give any mention of the studying himself. The students first learning English also was not considered form exposure from any type of media but also from school:

20) Binyamin: Minä sanon englanniksi. Um when I was at my home country, I graduated my it was like, like, peruskoulu in English. And about nine years it was. And we had

there courses just like English courses, academies. We went there for lessons. I learn English from there.”

(mina sanon englanniksi= I will say in English
peruskoulu= basic education)

Here according to Binyamin he learnt English at school. It must be added that it is very difficult to determine the level to which students were exposed to Western media as it could be that the students saw little to none before entering the West, in which case the students are simply stating pure facts. Despite this, especially when considering the case of Ali (examples 18 and 19), it is difficult to say where this school-oriented attitude to learning has come from. Perhaps it is not so much cultural as a consequence of school being something most people in the world go to for learning, nevertheless, this attitude is something that teachers can influence so that students would reflect on other aspects of their life that influence foreign language learning.

Classroom learning, or the instructional environment for the students has involved things such as learning vocabularies and grammar and conversation, like Ali expressed in example 19. The students mentioned that their teacher had influenced their current levels of English:

21) Ibrahim: When I was in Afghanistan in my home I have learned English for one and half year there, I was in the centre I learn English there, and also I have been in school also for a long time in ten years, but in this school we do not have a good teacher so English learning so because of that we would do class English not better and about here in Finland learn also I practice and have learn many things here

Here in the case of Ibrahim he states that had his teacher been better in Afghanistan he would have a better level in English, though he does not comment on the level of teaching he is receiving in Finland beyond “hav[ing] learnt many things”. Though Ibrahim considered school the major influence in language learning, he considered maintaining the current level of English up to the individual

22) Ibrahim: may forget all the vocabulary you cannot use it, it takes if you get far form English language you may forget all the vocabulary that you have its difficult at that time you speak English you cannot use, we always try to speak with people and also its was my negative when I get far from English language I have forgotten many grammar many words and also it affect on my speaking and understanding comprehension and many ways it affected, that's it

To Ibrahim one of the important responsibilities of a student is that they use the language, so he attempts to use the language so that he does not forget it, as this has happened to him before. This shows that though students may view the primary source for learning the various institutions one may go to, the participants are aware that language learning or at least maintaining can happen outside the language classroom and should be promoted to try learn languages in a variety of settings.

Despite the classroom centred view of learning, the students recognised their individual efforts to learn English. Attempts at autodidactic leaning are done with the aids of the internet, consuming media, and self-testing. As previously mentioned, the internet is a great source for learning and indeed the Finnish education system is currently implementing more technological devices into schools as students being able to use digital devices is seen as vital (OAJ 2016).

- 23) Binyamin: When we had the preposition course and exams when I tried to study and tried to understand it then I feel I cannot understand this because preposition is so difficult. And I tried to watch videos from YouTube to understand but with many videos I did not get anything from them but when I decide to do this and when I work hard then I get a good result from this it was a difficult grammar for me in English.

When studying for an exam Binyamin uses online videos as a resource to support his learning, albeit this specific time they did not help him, demonstrating how the internet has an influence on modern learning the support of which should not be neglected. The use of the internet does not guarantee that the student is able to use the resource so that they would feel they successfully learnt from this experience. Teaching student how to use this resource on their own time would again be something to consider, especially if the material is available in the students' L1 online. In addition to media created specifically for language learning, as English-language movies still dominate the medium, using them as cultural engagement is another major way students learn languages by themselves (Crystal 2003). As previously stated, movies can serve as a motivator, but also as language and culture input. What is also beneficial about movies is that students can see English and English communication in a context that is outside school giving them a chance to see English in a larger variety of environments.

Self testing was also mentioned by the students as a method for learning. Self-testing in this case was in the context of learning vocabulary:

- 24) Ali: joo, mutta miksi mä teen sen koska englanniksi suomeksi kun mä käännän sen minun pitää tietää se molemmat kieli, haluan kokeilla tiedäkö tai ei silloin kun en tiedä laitan sen dariksi
(yes, but why I do it because when [translating] from English to Finnish when I translate it I have to know both languages, I want to test do I know or not, when I don't know I put it into Dari)

As the students in this classroom have to engage in a lot of translation Ali shows how not taking the easiest route when translating, but going straight to the L1, but rather translating into Finnish becomes a method of testing oneself on one's knowledge of the vocabulary. Self-testing is one way to get feedback on language learning without necessitating interaction with a person for evaluation.

Taking into consideration these various ways that students learn, teaching should try focus on the experiences and build upon their experiences to draw out strengths and minimise weaknesses. Jessner and Kramsch (2015) write about institutions in the following way “foreign-born, native language instructor becomes an issue at academic institutions that value their authentic linguistic skills and their insider's cultural knowledge, but do not necessarily acknowledge their multilingual and multicultural experience.” (p. 87) In this case the multilingual and multicultural experience, especially of the students, cannot be laid aside as even though the students came from the same country and were of similar ages they too did not share the same experience in learning English, and thus commonalities between them must be found elsewhere if they need to be found, and the multicultural experience is one they can share in this case even with the teacher themselves who in this case is not a native English speaker.

4.1.3 Communication as a process in the classroom

Other than being a goal, the theme of communication was present throughout the study in relation to how it is conducted within the classroom. Communication in the classroom is

slightly more complicated, as though the socialisation as an acquisition process is present in the classroom, socialisation and communication happens in the classroom in multiple languages as well making it a global environment. Globality in this instance means “the name given to the extending matrix of those practices and subjectivities as they connect people across world-space” (James, 2006 p. 21). In relation to communication as a process of learning, Kramsch (2002) puts socialisation in the acquisition process as an activity that gives the student “incentives, models, data, trials, and feedback” (p. 51). This was present in the classroom as described by the participants in the interview as well.

This global matrix is both present in the classroom due to the individuals and the treated subject matter. On a base level, the classroom involves individuals coming from both Afghanistan and Finland in order to learn English. This can already be seen in the interview itself, reflective of the classroom in its natural state, which uses three languages constantly in places where it is deemed most useful for communication. With a mixture of languages there is also a mixture of cultures in the classroom that must find a way to coexist in a manner that facilitates learning.

Though the reason for studying English was its use as a lingua franca, the lingua franca in the classroom often is not English, but rather Finnish. This happens in the classroom as the English language is taught to the students through Finnish, as well as that the students seemed to have a stronger grasp of the Finnish language, most likely due to having studied all other classes in Finnish and being more exposed to it in their everyday environment. This bridge is also evident in the way that English and Finnish cultures exist in the West, thus Finnish becoming a bridge between cultures as well.

25) Ali: haluan lisätä, se on sama kun ensin me aloitamme joku kieli sama kun englannin kieli, silloin kun sanon sen dariksi sinun pitää se pitää sanoa englanniksi näin silloin minä tiedän mitä tarkoitin ja mitä minä haluan sanoa, minun, silloin minun pitää tietää, mutta kun tulee suomeksi ja englanniksi se on vieras kieli, sama kuin se tiedämme ja ymmärrämme hyvin ja sanoa mikä haluamme tiedämme jolla sanoin sen äsken että voi sana ei tarkoita meidän kielessä samaa mutta se suomen kielessä ja englannin kielessä voi tarkoittaa se sama kun toisessa

(Ali: I want to add, it is the same as first we begin with some language similar to English. When I say it in Dari you have to say it in English, then I know what I said

and what I want to say, I, I have to know, but when it comes in Finnish and English it is a foreign language, same as the one we know and understand well and say what we want, know what how I said it just that the word doesn't mean in our language the same, but in the Finnish language and English language it can mean the same as in the other.)

In this example concerning Finnish as a lingua franca, Ali (example 23) explains how some words do not exist in his L1, but as he now has access to the Finnish vocabulary, he has been able to find the translation to a word in Finnish, Finnish thus being the bridge between the languages. It also shows how some semantics in the Finnish language are more similar to English than an equivalent word in the L1, and thus in some cases using Finnish can be a help. Ali elaborates on this further later in the interview:

26) Ali: se mikä minulla on kokemus sen kun mä opiskelen sen Iranissa ja Afganistanissa meidän oma kielessä Se sana olivat tosi kaukana ei tarkoittavat mitä se sanovat, mutta sana riippuu ja kuuluu sen kulttuurin, mutta se suomen kulttuuri ja suomen kieli ja englannin kieli on sama kun se sano jotakin että ei suoraan voi sanoa sen esimerkiksi voi olla kulttuurissa meidän ihmisen välissä, suomen kieli auttaa, se on lähellä. Se on minulla jotenkin niin. Se on helpompi

Interviewer: suomessa koulussa kulttuuri lähempänä englanninkielinen kulttuuria? Mutta sanat lähempänä daria englanninkielen kanssa?

Ali: kyllä

(Ali: I have an experience, then when I study in Iran and Afghanistan in our own language, the word were very far away, they did not mean what they say, but the word is dependent on and belongs in the culture, but that Finnish culture and Finnish language and English language are the same when you say something that cannot be said can be in culture between our people, the Finnish language helps, it is close. For me it is something like this. It is easier.

Interviewer: In the Finnish school the culture is closer to English language culture? But the words are closer between Dari and English?

Ali: yes)

This example demonstrates Finnish as a cultural bridge, where according to Ali, he has experienced that there are similarities in Finnish and English in expression that translate between cultures in a manner that communication between English and his L1 do not. Though Finnish and Anglophone cultures are different, both can be found in the West, and thus one can find more cultural similarities between these languages than between English

and the L1 despite these two sharing the similar linguistic roots. Ali mentions this same point multiple times during the interview which emphasises the importance of this finding for him.

27) Ali: sana ei tarkoita meidän kielessä samaa mutaa se suomien kielessä ja englannin kielessä voi tarkoittaa se sama kun toisessa

(Ali: the word does not mean in our language the same but in Finnish and in English it can mean the same as in the other)

Ali explains that there are nuances within language where the cultural proximity between Finnish and English is able to ease understanding. These similarities between the cultures may have been eased by the fact that language learning is facilitated in Finnish and drawing parallels becomes easier, thus communication in Finnish is not purely confusing. The various differing cultures should not be ignored in the language class especially in these cases, as the teacher may have to work harder to understand what the students' culture is, and then explain through her Finnish understanding how a target Anglophone concept works. In the case of these students, this situation may be further helped by the fact that their teacher is also the Finnish language teacher. In Goldstein (2003) the Cantonese speaking teacher would use her L1 to help Cantonese speaking students to understand the material better. The Finnish speaking teacher is not given the luxury of being able to facilitate English learning through the students' L1 and thus Finnish is the only language she can use to help deepen the students' understanding. It is then in her benefit to try facilitate the students learning Finnish in order for the language to become a better lingua franca. This situation however comes dangerously close to the case of Catalan schools as described by De Mejía & Hélot, 2008, as the foreign students' learning English was overridden by the need to learn Catalan. The participants in the interview did not report such a situation taking place and discuss freely of the various activities and tests taken by them to assess and improve their English, showing that there is a balance to be found to further learning of both languages.

Despite Finnish as a lingua franca being a help, Ali adds in a different part of the interview that having three languages can be very confusing:

28) Ali: Kielioppia tosi vaikea se vähän sekaisin me koska silloin me opiskelemme kolme kieltä yhtäkaa emme osaa yhtään kieliä täydellisesti että ymmärrämme jes! se on se näin ja voimme opiskella sen toinen, se kolme kieli on ihan kelillä sekaisiin joskus unoitamme oma kieli mutta on hauskaa.

(Ali: Grammar is very difficult it is a little mixed up because when we study three languages at the same time we do not know any language perfectly that we would understand yes! It is like this and we can study the other, the three languages are completely mixed up sometimes we forget our own language but we have fun.)

In example 28 Ali describes that because understanding in every language is patchy, it takes time for the students to be able to understand concepts. Though Finnish is able to bridge some cultural gaps, the students are not immediately able to understand everything communicated to them in Finnish nor English, and their L1 is not culturally able to convey everything even if translation for some of the communication is available. Further, Gogolin (2002) states that minority languages begin to show traces of the surrounding language, showing how communication in this language too is changes by the different environment of communication. This point is supported by De Mejía& Hélot (2008) where Irish is difficult to learn because understanding of most material is incomplete. Ali in example 28 speaks of studying three languages. As the students are not able to study their L1 at this school, the third language he is referencing is in all likelihood Swedish:

29) Ibrahim: The situations we are learning three language at the same time and I am learning Finnish very well and I also learn English but at the same time Swedish language. And cause I don't like Swedish language its conversations and grammars a little different, and when I study something Finnish or English up to that when we have Swedish three years then it mixed all the things and I forgot all the things what I studied in English and Finnish ,that's why Swedish always disturbed me to learn these two languages and my friend Gabriel told to me that the Swedish language is the worst language

Example 29 shows that Ibrahim felt that handling two languages at the school was manageable, but that the addition of yet another language to be studied that they are not familiar with added further difficulty into communication due to mixing all three up. When teaching a language the teacher has to be aware that the students are beginners learning three languages at the same time, and thus perhaps needs to communicate their differences with increased clarity as the students are less capable of doing it themselves.

In this global environment students did not feel the need to forsake their own L1 but rather embraced it and felt that it was valuable in the classroom:

30) Binyamin: joo, if you know your mother language the you can explain everything easily in other languages when you words some points at the first you must understand in your mother language how can I explain this in mother language I always when I don't understand something I firstly try to understand in mother language then in other languages then in my opinion it's so necessary to remember out mother language because it help to explain better other languages

Dalia: olemme sama mieltä

Ali: kaikki samaa mieltä

Ibrahim: sinä tunnet oman äidinkielen tiedä sen toisen kielen, ja pitäisi tunne hyvin

(Binyamin: joo= yes

Dalia: we agree

Ali: all agree

Ibrahim: you know your mother tongue know the other language, and should know well.)

In example 30, especially Binyamin explains that understanding what is being communicated is easiest when he can first process this to his own mother tongue. The students whether knowing the concept of transfer or not, understand that their L1 is an important tool in order to be able to navigate in the global classroom, which is reflective of the findings of Goldstein (2003) where the Cantonese students too used their L1 to clarify and deepen understanding by discussing the subject matter in their own L1 amongst each other as well as of the case of Gogolin (2002) where the value of being able to communicate in the L1 increases. It then shows that in certain places that a global matrix in a classroom meant that speakers of the same language should be able to use it when it can help make sense of a topic.

Looking at communication now from a language learning perspective in the classroom, the participants report many of the same things that Kramsch (2002) lists whereby communication is essential for the process of learning a foreign language. During the interview Dalia expresses that she would like to have more discussions in the classroom and this sentiment is supported by other students as well.

31) Dalia: mä tykkään että pitää, mä tykkään on olla keskustelua koska ihminen oppi puhumisesta mutta meillä ei ole luokassa mitään keskustelua vain opettaja kyllä opettaa ja keskustelu se vaikuttaa tosi paljon

Me: kaikki on samaa mieltä pitäisi keskustella enemmän?

Kaikki: joo

(Dalia: I think that we should, I like conversation because a person learns by talking but we do not have conversation only the teacher does teach and conversation has a great effect

Interviewer: Do you all agree that you should have more conversations?

All: yes)

In example 31 communication in the target language is important for Dalia. She claims it is beneficial for learning and according to it has a positive effect on her learning. Ali similarly recounts using ELF and how using the language improved his English:

32) Ali: silloin kun mä tulin ensin suomeen ja mulla ei ole mitään tietoa suomen kielestä ja aina mä puhun sen ihmisen kanssa englannin kielillä ja se oli tosi hyvä minulle mä selvitin kaikki asiat ja mitä minulla oli se oli tosi hyvä ja sen jälkeen kun mitä minä oppisin ennen englannin kielessä sen sama tulee suomen kieli ja silloin minulla se helpottaa ja auttaa

(Ali: when I first came to Finland and I had no knowledge of the Finnish language I always spoke to the person in English and it was good for me I clarified many things and what I had it was very good, after that what I learn before English, the same came to Finnish and then for me it makes it easier and helps)

Ali's comment in example 32 shows that for him the trial of speaking English with others gave him feedback on how well he was able to speak, which gave him motivation to *selvitin kaikki asiat* (*clarified many things*) he noticed that he was lacking in order to become a better communicator. This supports the claims of Kramsch (2002) on the benefits of communication in language learning. What most likely has added to this view is that Ali reports the process having worked in multiple instances. To other participants too communication is reported as a motivational experience:

33) Ibrahim: so when I was starting there in the course the situation was different from my home and with people when I was talking with my teacher with and my friends they know and also I was practicing with them my English language was improving at that time so the situation there people do not speak English you may forget all the vocabulary you cannot use it, it takes if you get far from English language you may forget all the vocabulary that you have its difficult at that time you speak English you cannot use, we always try to speak with people and also its was my negative when I

get far from English language I have forgotten many grammar many words and also it affect on my speaking and understanding comprehension and many ways it affected, that's it

Unlike in Ali's case in example 32 , Ibrahim's experience of communication takes place in a language classroom which was experienced positive in an equal manner as he improved. Ibrahim's comments reflect Kramsch's (2002) mention of feedback and data as he compares both improvement and regression in his skills though his ability to communicate in English. In another comment Ibrahim elaborates on this experience:

34) Ibrahim: I don't have good experience about English but maybe when I was speaking with my teacher and my friend and studies were here also and it was so amazing for me to speak when you speak with somebody and you understand what he or she means that time I get stronger and stronger and also English language based on grammar, when you understand the grammar it can help you to speak also. Maybe that might be good.

In these two comments Ibrahim has identified two points of improvement though communication: and improvement in vocabulary and grammar. description of his improvements in examples 33 and 34 are tied to him communicating with someone and being able to understand what they mean as he put together these various aspects of language that enable him to understand communication in English. This is linked to Kramsch (2002) saying that communication provides a model for how to use language.

The students also mention communicating in their L1 in the classroom. This is said to happen when they are in the need of assistance in a task and they turn for help from a peer.

35) Ali: kun meille tulee joku ongelma mitä emme tiedä sen autamme, toiselle ja pyydämme apua että tiedätkö sen jos joku sanoo esimerkiksi Yazan ja mehdi [män] Binyamin kun he sanovat joo autamme toisella ja opiskelemme yhdessä se helpottaa ja kaikki tiedä ei kukaan voi tiedä sen kaikkea täydellisesti mutta voin me auttaa toiselle.

interviewer: onko tämä luokassa?

Ali: joo kyllä,

interviewer: että opettaja antaa kysyä?

Ali: kyllä

(Ali: when we have a problem that we do not know we help each other and ask for help that do you know it for if someone for example Yazan and Jusuf [män] Binyamin when they say yes we will help the other and study together is helps and everyone know nobody can know everything perfectly but we can help each other

Interviewer: is this in the classroom?

Ali: yes

Interviewer: and the teacher lets you ask?

Ali: yes)

In example 35 Ali elaborates on the process he engages in when he does not know an answer, explaining that the students often talk amongst each other asking for help in difficult spots with the permission of the teacher. The code switch to Dari, most probably an accidental slip as grammatically it does not seem to properly pertain to any of the languages (Finnish, Persian, English) in a cohesive manner, here implies that assistance happens in the L1 and that communication with peers is most natural in the L1. Other proof of communication being in the L1 is the intermittent code switches to the L1 throughout the interview. Similar to the case of the Mandarin speakers, students use their L1 in the classroom in a similar manner to the Cantonese speakers in Goldstein (2003) in order to facilitate understanding as well as that the L1 may be a tool for group cohesion that promotes language learning as well (Gopar, 2016). This is further supported by students translating the interview questions into the L1 several times during the interview. It is also important that the student knows that this is something that they are allowed to do, which perhaps may encourage them to engage more in peer learning.

Communication in the classroom also extends to basic everyday interaction. Here Ibrahim speaks of what he sees as important communication in the classroom that increases group cohesion and motivation:

36) Ibrahim: Esimerkiksi joskus greeting the student like that not everybody have to maybe hello how are you everybody, it means you start something joskus esimeriksi Dalia what did you do yesterday, how are you, maybe generally you maybe you can ask a question the student getting energy

(Ibrahim: esimeriksi- for example, joskus- sometimes)

For Ibrahim communication with the teacher is deemed important, but more importantly he wishes for the communication that does not relate to class work but rather to inquiry on the students' well-being as well. The positive experiences Kramsch (2002) mentions in the classroom in the target language are important, but beyond this communication in all the languages are an important tool to create a safe space for experimentation.

4.1.4 Motivators in the classroom

Motivation is an integral part of learning. Outside motivators like wanting to learn English for ease of travel, students find motivators in the classroom itself as well. Motivation specifically relates to the feeling of autonomy and agency in action so that the individual sees themselves "as a thinking, feeling human being, with an identity, a personality, a unique history and background, with goals, motives and intentions" (Lamb, Gao & Murray, 2011 p.12) This definition for motivation is suitable concerning that it takes into account the histories of the individual that may affect their motivation, especially as the students do not share the same background in language learning. The major positive influence in leaning the students found in the teacher, whose energy the students reported being sensitive to. For negative influence on motivation the students cited comparing themselves to other members in the class who were better than them.

During the interview it became clear that there were certain individuals that were regarded as the best in their class. This became evident through compliments such as Ali's description of his friends as being the best in their class. This comparison however at times came with a lowered self-esteem. Dalia, for whom English was self-professed as a struggle, this was the case:

37) Dalia: mitä mä sanoin, kännykkä ja, mm, aa epätoivo! joskus muut opiskelijat tässä luokassa Linnea, Yazan, Ibrahim, ja Binyamin osaavat paremmin mutta kun me katsomme heitä he osaavat ja me emme osaa tulee huono olo ja myös kokeessa jos joskus emme saa hyviä numeroja sit silleen sanomme en halua enää opiskella koska en osaa, en voi ymmärtää, mutta joskus tulee toivo silloin on hyvä.

(Dalia: what was I saying, the phone and umm right despair! Sometimes the other students in this class, Linnea, Ibrahim and Binyamin know better but when we look at them they are able to and we are not able to we get a bad feeling and also in the exam is sometimes we do not get good numbers then we kind of say we do not want to study because I am not able to, I cannot understand, but sometimes I get hope, then it is good.)

Epätoivo ('despair'), a feeling opposite to hope and feeling motivated, is described by Dalia as her feeling that she completely incapable of ever understanding the material and commanding the English language. For Dalia this feeling leads to not wanting to study at all and quitting the process altogether. A catalyst for this feeling of inadequacy is getting bad grades and it is linked to feeling that she cannot keep up with those regarded as the best students in the class. This unmet goal lowers Dalia's feeling of agency. This means that her motivation is lowered as she cannot reach the standard she has set for herself of being as skilled as the students viewed the best in the class. These feelings are similar to those professed by Gabriel for whom studying is also a struggle.

38) Gabriel: Hyvä? Ei milloinkaan, koska minä kun tulin se on seitsemän luokka ja minulla on ollut vaikea koska ne kaikki osaavat mutta minä en osaa yhtään ja pitäisi seuraa samaan aikaan ja sitten se oli minulle vaikea

(Gabriel: good? Never, because when I came t was seventh class and I have had difficult because they all are able to and I cannot at all and I have to follow at the same time and then it was difficult for me)

In example 38 Gabriel explains that he does not feel good studying English because he is not as good as the other students. Gabriel has never studied English before but despite this he is setting his expectations to the same level as those students who have studied English for several years and thus his expectations are not realistic, which is bound to lead to failure and thus lowered sense of agency and motivation. This competitive view may in part be due to cultural attitudes where in the culture the students grew up in had a more competitive

environment, and thus students bring this attitude to the Finnish classroom. Comparison itself is not completely bad, as it can help students monitor and evaluate their own progress (Lamb, Gao & Murray, 2011), however Hanus and Fox (2015) note that there is a negative correlation between a socially comparative environment and intrinsic motivation, stating that this sort of environment in excess is constricting. This is further seen in Dalia's description of patterns of thought that display low self-esteem:

39) Dalia: silloin kun olen kokeessa ja opettaja laittaa kuuntelutehtäviä silloin minulla on tosi vaikea, minä en ymmärrä yhtään niitä ja myös kirjoittamisesta se on tosi vaikeaa aina sanon itselle että en osaa milloinkaan

(Dalia: when I am in a test and the teacher puts on listening comprehension exercises I have a very difficult time, I do not understand them and also writing it is very difficult I always tell myself that I will never be able)

Dalia's patterns of thought are quite negative as rather than trying to find new paths for understanding she defaults to assuming that she is not capable of understanding when she encounters a problem that she finds difficult. Dalia believes that her talents are fixed and not capable of change and this mindset lowers motivation to learn languages (Lamb, Gao & Murray, 2011). Only one coping strategy for learning was listed when students felt overwhelmed which was to take a break and hopefully understand the material later.

Despite the negative outlook that some students showed towards learning languages, the students expressed that there was one source from where they could get positive reinforcement and motivation: the teacher. The reason for this may be once again cultural, as the power distance between teacher and student is higher in the country of origin for many of these students, and thus a teachers' feedback is more valuable. In Finland the power distance is lower between student and teacher, one such marker being the use of the first name when addressing the teacher, though this does not mean that student's in Finland do not find that teachers have an effect on motivation, teachers clearly affects students' motivation in Finnish classrooms as well (Salmela-Aro & Aunola 2018). Then perhaps due to cultural reasons of authority or then out of a simple respect for this particular teacher, or both, the students mirrored greatly the energy of the teacher, one being the already mentioned example 33, where Ibrahim explains that a conversation with the teacher gives students energy. This sort of talk in the classroom is more authentic in terms of expression of identity than classroom

talk which may only have an educational value (Lamb, Gao & Murray, 2011). The inquiry into students' wellbeing gives them a chance to build their identity in interaction with the teacher.

Encouragement from the teacher has great value and is a great motivator as well:

- 40) Ibrahim: nothing but maybe using the phone is also and on thing is very important we want an energy teacher, the teacher must be enough energy to teach and also encouraging the students also important, sanoo hyviä sanoja excellent very good. Because when somebody is trying to learn something, he can't use a word then the teacher encourage and at that time he try to become better in that (sanoo hyviä sanoja= says good words)

Ibrahim explains that when the teacher praises the student for good effort it is very encouraging, which applies also for effort even when the student is yet to achieve their goal. The teacher is there to supervise the progress and positive reinforcement expresses to the student that this is in fact happening. On the flip side, students expressed that negative energy was equally contagious as positive energy:

- 41) Dalia: joskus jos opettajalla olisi, oli väsynyt tai vihainen tai stressaa sekin vaikutta oppilaille. En voi oppia mitään
(Dalia: sometimes if the teacher had, was tired or angry or stressing that also affects students. I cannot learn anything)

For Dalia a teacher's anger or stress, even when she knows that it is not directly aimed at her prevents her from being able to learn anything. Empathy being a necessary human emotion, in this case the teacher's negative feelings are ingested by Dalia so that she ceases being able to learn due to also feeling these emotions. These situations are difficult to solve as a teacher will not in most cases be able to completely hide their emotions, and a vital question is also how much a teacher should show or hide their emotions. Is there a cultural factor where a person of authority should keep their distance and would lose their authority if they show too much emotion or an attitude where the students feel that it is their responsibility to keep a teacher happy. The case could also purely be that the teacher work though the problem interactionally. Ali expressed how he felt he too had experienced this in his own life:

- 42) Ali: Opettajan rooli sekin vaikutta sen kaikki asiat, miten joku opettaja voi olla miten hän oppia opiskelija sillä on tosi korkea rooli että voi joku tiedä sen ja miten hän voi selittää sen aineen ja sen asian se vaikutta, jos joku opettaja puhuu kovasti ja hän

haluaa vain tehdä mitä hän lukujärjestyksessä lukee se oppilaskin tuntee näin että mää teen vain tehtävän mitä opettaja sanoi, mutta joku opettaja sama kuin Marja se rakastaa sen oppimisesta ja hän haluaa että joku tietää jotain se ei ole ero sama kuin joku piste mutta kun joku oppia sen hänellä tulee hyvä tunto ja sano jes mä voin oppia se uutta asiaa niin eteen, opettaja-

(Ali: the teachers role it also influences things, how some teacher can be how she teaches a student has a very high role that how one can learn and how she explains the material and it has an effect, is some teacher speaks harshly and they want to do only what is written in the schedule the student feels that I only do these exercises that the teacher said but some teacher like Marja she loves learning and wants that someone knows something, it is not a difference like some dot, but when someone learns she gets a good feeling and say yes, I can learn new things ahead, the teacher-)

Ali says in example 42 that a teacher needs to care about what he is teaching rather than rush impatiently through material in order to get the paycheck. Another descriptor of teachers in Ali's words is that a teacher needs to be *ystävällinen* (*friendly*). These descriptors of teachers are quite easily said to be universal requirements for teachers and in this sense it is not surprising that the participants expressed this to be important in teachers. It however should be mentioned that as these students are immigrants, they are not likely to have many other individuals in their lives whom they are acquainted with and who could care about them. The need for these attributes in a teacher then perhaps are heightened. Like in Goldstein (2003) the Cantonese speaking students valuing their peers and teachers and dissent in group behaviour is socially destructive, these immigrant students reflect similar patterns in social organisation.

Other cultural factors that could have an impact on how students view the teacher are linked to what the gender and marital status of the teacher are. In many Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries, such as Iran and Afghanistan, schools are segregated, making mixed classrooms and teachers of the opposite gender something that students need to get used to. Marital status, especially for a woman may add to the level of respect they command before ever meeting the class. It is unclear what for example the marital status of the teacher in this classroom was, but the students clearly gave glowing remarks of her teaching showing that they valued her despite the cultural differences in her style that may have required adjustment.

4.2 Multilingualism

This second half of the analysis is focused on the language learning process itself and thus analysis is taken from a societal perspective such as classroom function and communication to the level the individual learner and the processes used for learning English. As Binyamin describes learning in Finnish is difficult because it is an unfamiliar language that the students are yet to understand well. This links to how learning and understanding all the various aspects of the English language are all tied to how well the students understand Finnish which is not simple due to the novelty of the Finnish language in the students' lives.

4.2.1 Structure

The theme of structure refers to all the individual mechanical parts of language students need have knowledge of in order to gain a certain level of proficiency in English. These parts include but are not limited to: learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Some challenges that the students face in this area are similar to other foreign language learners such as learning vocabulary and irregular verbs or how to use prepositions, such as in the case of Binyamin who simply had to work hard to achieve his goals:

- 43) Binyamin: when we had the preposition course and exams when I tried to study and tried to understand it then I feel I cannot understand this because preposition is so difficult.

In this example Binyamin describes how he studied hard for an exam and the subject matter of prepositions was a very difficult subject for him. In many cases learning these aspects simply means learning things by heart such knowing the difference between “write down” and “write-up”. This classroom however faces difficulty also due to having to deal with the Finnish aspects of this area as well as factors such as not being able to read and write in the L1.

A lot of the discussion revolving around language skill was about comparing Finnish and English to each other, which most likely reflects that the students are learning the languages at the same time.

44) Dalia: suomen kieli ja englanninkieli on - sen välissä on iso eroa. Koska suomen kielestä kun me kirjoitamme ja kun me luemme samassa me kirjoitamme mikä me äännämme mutta englanninkieli se on eri. Ääntäminen kun me kirjoitamme se on eri kuin me äännämme sen. Se on emme tiedä miten voisimme ääntää tai kun ope sanoo jotain meidän pitää kirjoittaa suullinen koe me emme tiedä miten meidän pitäisi koska ope ääntää eri kuin kirjoittaa. Eli se on tosi vaikeaa

(Dalia: The Finnish language and English language is. There is a big difference. Because in the Finnish language when we write and when we read it is the same as how we write what we pronounce but in the English language it is different. Pronunciation when we write it is different to pronunciation. It is, we do not know how we could pronounce or when the teacher says something we need to write in an oral exam we do not know how we should because pronunciation is different to writing. So it is very difficult)

45) Gabriel: ääntäminen ja kirjoittaminen on vaikeaa, ja sitten puhuvat pitäisi ensi esimerkiksi suomeksi kun sinä kuuntelet suomea sinä suoraan kirjoitat mutta englanniksi ei oo tämmösiä se on vaikea esimerkiksi "expensive" joo se mulle on vaikea se joo ääntää

(Gabriel: pronunciation and writing is difficult, and then speaking you would first have to for example in Finnish when you listen to Finnish you write directly but in English there is no such thing it is difficult for example "expensive" yeah that for me is difficult to pronounce)

Example 44 discusses how one of the challenges students face is that English spelling of a word is different to the way it is pronounced, whereas in Finnish a word is pronounced and spelled the same way. Example 45 discusses the same phenomenon as Dalia where spelling is much easier in Finnish as it reflects the pronunciation directly. The comparison between the languages may be due to the fact that the students are currently learning Finnish and English at the same time so that comparing two learnt languages is almost an involuntary reaction. As previously mentioned, Gabriel had not studied English before coming to Finland, and thus his languages learning may be slightly different to the others as he has no experience learning English though his L1, meaning that the connections between then L1 and English may be harder to notice. In addition to the difficulty of making connections, he does not have a previously existing base understanding of the English which the others not only possess but

have also had the luxury of leaning in the L1 which may undoubtedly have been an easier process.

As previously mentioned, in this classroom Finnish is the lingua franca. This extends to learning grammar as well where in order to produce something English Dalia's thought process happens through two languages in the order that she has learnt them (see example 44). As the participants are learning both languages at the time is that students report mixing them at times

46) Ali: se englannin kieli on tosi helppo ja sen oppi kieli ja sanat mutta vain sen kirjoittaminen on minulle vaikea ja silloin kun se tulee tosi vaikeampi kun se mä opin suomen kieli oppi kieliä ja en voi erottaa kumpi on kumpi ja mitä voin käyttää silloin vähän minulla tulee yrittää ja en voisi erottaa, silloin ehkä tunnen

(Ali: the English language is really easy and its grammar and words only its writing is difficult for me and when it becomes more difficult when it I learn Finnish grammar languages and I cannot separate which is which and what I can use, then I have to try and I could not separate, then maybe I feel)

Ali explains that learning Finnish added difficulty for him because he began to mix up and not be able to separate various grammatical functions between Finnish and English. This entanglement between the two languages may be exacerbated by the fact that they exist in the same space when English is being learnt. There is however also the aspect of proficiency in a language to be considered:

47) Ibrahim: so it's quite different between English and Finnish language because in Finnish we don't have many tenses we have in English language so maybe it for me it better I can repeat English language and I can learn better Finnish language so its not so strange for me to learn English or Finnish like this.

In example 47 Ibrahim is bringing about the idea that English could be easier to learn if the students were learning it though a language that they were not learning the rudimentary aspects for. Perhaps then rather than simply the presence of the Finnish language being the issue, a part of the problem is that the students have very similar levels of material they are working on in both the Finnish and the English classroom and the similar contents increase the likelihood that various aspects of the two languages are mixed up.

The difficulties do not mean that Finnish cannot assist in learning, as it may be quite effective when learning vocabulary. This is due to the cultural differences in language which were partially explored in the previous section. Section 4.1.3 discussed how Finnish and English had similar cultural nuances in words due to both being languages used in the West. In learning vocabulary Finnish can add an extra avenue of meaning that helps understand nuance between words that otherwise would have been more difficult to access. The teacher still does have to explain what the different nuances are though, and Ibrahim explains that to do this:

- 48) Ibrahim: when the teacher say a words it difficult sometime when the teacher uses the word in many sentences it might help a lot because in many words it has its own meaning in different sentence you cannot use in so many words

Example 48 demonstrates that the teacher uses context clues to explain the differences between the different words whether the language be in Finnish or English. In a nutshell, as Ibrahim adds: “suomi hyvä kun ymmärrän suomea (Finnish is good when I know Finnish)” meaning that using Finnish in learning English still tied to comprehension of Finnish and the nuances in Finnish when it is being used to help elaborate the meaning behind English. Dalia and Binyamin add slightly earlier in the interview that Finnish can at times be useful for students to use on their own when the L1 is of no assistance, but the L1 is still the preferred avenue for learning, and only after the L1 is of no help do students move on to use Finnish. Thus the assistance of the Finnish in learning English is linked back to the need to be more proficient in Finnish.

In addition to the influence of Finnish, the students’ backgrounds influence their language learning. First is the afore mentioned previous experience of learning English in the L1, which means that the students have to relearn terminology in Finnish in order to understand the subject at hand, as is the case for Yazan:

- 49) Yazan: I, when I was leaning English in school in there, so there the teacher is was writing also the definition in both language in Dari and in English and it can help us better then.

Yazan found having the translation and the connection between his L1 and English being immediately made for him in the classroom much easier, and it is something that he misses having. Creese (2005) mentions this being the exact hurdle that multilingual classrooms have to overcome as teachers need to relearn how to create these moments for students to use their backgrounds as leverage in language learning when the student's background is culturally and linguistically different. In the case of Gabriel (see example 38), who is learning English for the first time, he has never had these pointed out, and so has a greater hurdle in learning grammar, but he does not have to relearn the terminology nor translate what he has learnt in one context to another. Beyond learning English for the first time, some students also are learning reading and writing for the first time:

- 50) Yazan: we have that kind people they can speak and they can understand but they cannot write and read and that time its difficult to understand doing it the second language. When you know that grammar is easy, if you said then you can learn so fast another language, it help them most. And the you learn second language

In example 50 Yazan explains that having to learn a foreign language though another foreign language is extremely hard for students who do not know how to read or write in any language. Assuming an illiterate student learns to write in either English, Finnish or both, they may benefit from the angle taken by students in Gopar (2016) where the orthography for the translation was made up by the students themselves in order to give them a change to use the L1 for understanding. In the case of those who do already know how to read and write, the differences in the writing system is still quite great as Yazan explains:

- 51) Yazan: first the difference is between our mother language; I mean Dari and English and Finnish, First the alphabet is so difference in English and language there is like they are writing from left hand to right hand in Dari we are writing from right hand to left hand so there is a big difference and also they writing in Dari is like English where when we are writing the word we pronounce it different to when we are writing the word in English also like this, in Dari we are using the helping verb at the end of the sentence in English is in English and Finish we are using the helping word in the main part of the sentence

Yazan (example 47) explains the differences between Dari and English, where Dari has a different writing system as well as that is it grammatically different from English as well. This is an example of language awareness, where Yazan demonstrates that he is able to pick out differences and similarities between his L1 and English in orthography, speech and

grammar and how they should be used in each language accordingly. This links back to Creese (2005) where these are the things that the teacher has to pay attention to as teaching this specific group of students, as well as that she may be able to point out these similarities and differences to students like Gabriel who have never studied English. This is a challenge for even the most experienced of educators.

4.2.2 Language switch

The previous section brought up the point that a teacher should be able to create situations that enable students to make connections between the students' L1 and English. This section discusses how to facilitate this. More generally the section focuses on drawing on multiple languages and learning multiple languages in tandem as they appear in the participants' learning. These phenomena are used by the students as vehicles for learning the subjects and overcoming the specific difficulties they encounter and add efficiency and understanding.

Drawing on similarities between the three languages when learning was shown to happen often as the students learnt and the students report of utilising both languages in their learning English much like transfer reported by Amaro, Rothman, & Flynn (2012) in adult learning where students draw upon all the languages they have learnt. Students often tried to find similarities between their own L1 before attempting to find similarities between others:

52) Binyamin: joo, if you know your mother language the you can explain everything easily in other languages when you words some points at the first you must understand in your mother language how can I explain this in mother language I always when I don't understand something I firstly try to understand in mother language then in other languages then in my opinion it's so necessary to remember out mother language because it help to explain better other languages

Binyamin discusses in example 52 how he thinks that the L1 is important because though it he is able to understand various concepts with more ease, and when he has a problem he will often resort to the L1 in order to try understand the material. This very process is discussed in Nation (2001) where students processed material in their L1 before doing a written task on the same material in an L2 for increased understanding. Often students do find similarities between the languages and use it to their advantage as expressed by Ibrahim who likes

studying English for this very reason. Learning after this realisation was more efficient for learning because Ibrahim had noted that English and Dari are similar in both grammar and vocabulary. It should be noted that word order in Persian is mostly SOV unlike in English where it is SVO which often causes problems for learners whose L1 is Persian save for the few cases where the word order is exactly the same, though spoken Persian has a more free word order than the written form of the language (Izadin and Rahimi, 2015). Though pronunciation is quite different there are some similarities to be found as expressed by Binyamin comparing Finnish and English:

- 53) Binyamin: English language is so different from other languages for example Finnish and English is not same. Just like for example Finnish words are not the same, never match. Also the pronunciations and grammars this is big change between them we have some words in English in our Dari language just like in our own town people tomato, [tomato] just like tomato is the same pronunciation. This is when something else they match the words so if you compare Finnish and English it doesn't match

Binyamin discusses how some words in Dari and English are essentially the same which makes learning the language easy whereas in English and Finnish the number of shared words is smaller. This commonality between words reflects Dari and English both being in the Indo European language tree and thus structurally do have more in common than Dari has with Finnish, though it must be noted that the word tomato is not as common in Farsi, the Iranian dialect of Persian where the word گوجه (gowje) is used instead regional differences then being important to consider in the cases of some languages for transfer. Other words that are easy to transfer from one language to another in Persian would include: father- پدر (pedar), brother- برادر (bradâr) and daughter- دختر (Dokhtar).

Finnish and English as previously discussed both are used in the West, and thus despite their linguistic differences can be used to support language learning if both. Ali elaborates on the previously discussed cultural transfer:

- 54) Ali: Sama kuin vihainen, kiusata, sama kuin sanoa järjestyksessä, se kaikki meidän kielessä tarkoittaa yhtä, mä voin olla vihainen, mutta silloin kun me haluaisimme oppia englanniksi vain me käänämme sen yksi sana että se tarkoittaa tämä mutta kun se suomen kieli miksi se auttaa koska tiedämme kun tämä sana esimerkiksi olisi neljä kymisyys on mutta on vain yksi vastaus, mutta kun me tiedämme neljä kysymys

meilläkin on neljä vastaus. Koska se on sama mitä asia on täällä Suomessa ja Euroopassa. Se kaikki.

(same as to be angry, tease same as to say in order, it all in our language means the same, I can be angry, but when we want to learn English we only learn the one word that it means this, but when the Finnish language helps is why because when we know this word, for example if you have four questions but one answer, but when we know four questions we also have four answers. Because it is the same thing here in Finland and Europe. That is all.)

Example 51 has Ali discussing how some words in his L1 do not have the different nuances that in English and Finnish may contain several words to describe the different nuances around a theme or concept. Ali gives examples where the word for tease in Persian does not exist with a connotation where teasing could be done out of an affection towards another person or that the word for anger too may be marked with an association with sadness that is not present in the English or Finnish version of the word. The use of the metaphor between lock and key described by Ali shows how finding this equivalency in translation has probably been an epiphany for him which has helped him in learning English and Finnish. In addition to learning different words in Finnish and English that have cultural similarities between each other, learning the terminology that is used to learn grammar has been a point of transfer as noted multiple times by the participants:

55) Gabriel: tuntuu vaikealta mutta joskus tuntuu helpolta koska mää olen opiskellut suomea, sinä kun osaat toisen kielen kolmas tulee helposti, tiedät miten se lause tulee, ja sitten esim. lauseessa tulee imperfekti perfekti tällöisiä ja sitten sama ja nyt kun sinä tiedät esim. sinä opiskelet suomea miten samalla se tavalla englanti tulee. Tuntuu hyvältä

(Gabriel: it feels difficult but sometimes it feels easy because I have studied Finnish, when you know a second language the third comes easy, you know how the sentence comes and then for example come the imperfect, perfect these and then the same and now when you know for example you study Finnish in the same way the English comes. It feels good.)

56) Dalia: kun me tiedämme suomen kielen säännöt ja sen kautta ymmärrämme myös englannin kieltä ja opettaja aina kirjoittaa suomeksi mitä sääntö on ja myös englanniksi mitä se tarkoittaa se suomeksi.

(Dalia: when we know the rules for Finnish and though that understand English. The teacher always writes in Finnish what the rules are and also in English what does it mean in Finnish)

Example 55 has Gabriel describing that learning Finnish before ever studying English has aided him in learning as he now is familiar with concepts describing grammar such as the imperfect tense or the various parts making up a sentence. Dalia (example 56) notes the same thing and explains that the teacher will translate a concept in English and Finnish during a lesson. The students learning the terminology used in grammar as well as its transfer may be accelerated by the fact that the teacher is the same in Finnish as well as English and in this way she can draw out the similarities between the languages on purpose as is implied by Dalia. This practice by the teacher helps increase the amount of transfer between the L2 and L3 for the students and in the case that students are already familiar with the English concept but not the Finnish one will help them learn Finnish.

The students expressed that learning English though Finnish for them meant learning two languages at the same time. With the educator teaching both Finnish and English the learning of two languages simultaneously becomes intentional as the teacher assures that transfer between the two languages happens at all times.

57) Ali: on meidän rakas opettaja ja se on iso. Se auttaa sen englannin kieli hän opettaa meille myös suomen kieli

Interviewer: myös?

Ali: joo, Joskus hänkin käyttää jotakin sanaa suomeksi englanniksi. Ja englanniksi suomeksi

Binyamin: she always try her best teach to us try to understand us and we also try to learn easily and we have very good teachers English language

Interviewer: Vaikuttaako että hän opettaa molempia kieliä?

Dalia: joo se vaikuttaa samaan aikaan voisimme opiskella suomea ja myös englantia.

(Ali: she is our dear teacher it is big. It helps with the English language she teaches us also the Finnish language

Interviewer: as well?

Ali: yes, sometimes she uses some word form Finnish to English. And from English to Finnish

Binyamin: *she always try her best teach to us try to understand us and we also try to learn easily and we have very good teachers English language*

Interviewer: does it matter that she teaches both languages?

Dalia: yes it matters, at the same time we may study Finnish and also English.)

This example shows how students are aware of the fact that they are learning two languages in tandem, which may be beneficial for their language learning. The students point out the practices that the teacher uses to ensure that students learn both the Finnish and the English concepts during class. Some students take this further on their own and test themselves to see whether they already know a word in both languages as demonstrated in example 22 by Ali who prefers to translate an English word into Finnish before trying it in Dari. This shows that it is not impossible to learn two languages simultaneously, but there needs to be a way to find out what is meant in these two languages when a student is not able to decipher the meaning in either of the two, whether it be aid from a teacher, images or a way to translate into a third language.

In the briefing before the interview students were told that they may use any language they feel most comfortable speaking in, as long as there was a way to make sure that at the end of the interaction I understood what was being communicated, i.e. at some point there had to be communication in either English or Finnish. Code switching happened several times during the interview itself, though it can be generalised that code switch between individuals when giving their responses was due to comfort in the ability to express themselves in the chosen language, “[f]or quite often, changing the language when addressing a new partner is only the functional aspect of adapting to his or her language preference which diverges from that of the preceding addressee.”(Heller,1988 p. 208) Despite this, it can be concluded that code-switch was often linked to certain subjects, which will have reflected how students have learnt different languages in different contexts. An example of this is Binyamin in example 20 who when explaining his background switched multiple times Finnish and English, beginning in Finnish to express his wish to switch to English, but then using the Finnish word *peruskoulu* when describing his basic education. Binyamin’s switch in the beginning was very deliberate and most likely referred to how he was introduced as the next turn taker by Ali who said “okei Binyamin Habibi kerro” (okay Binyamin Habibi tell) and wanted to switch from Finnish to English, however the second code switch was a return to Finnish which he would not have done had he immediately known the English language equivalent. Ali does the same:

58) Ali: viikonloppuna meillä oli conversation, puhumme toiselle ja kysymme semmoisia ja koulussa opiskelen vähän englantia ja kaksi, kolme vuotta en opiskele mitään taas alkaa suomessa.

(during the weekend we had *conversation*, we spoke to the other and asked these things and at school I studied a little English and two, three years I do not speak anything and began again in Finland).

Here Ali, also describing his previous schooling, speaks mostly in Finnish, but uses the English word for *conversation* as though Ali prefers to speak in Finnish, having used the word 'conversation' in school for the activity in question, it is the one he uses when he speaks. This code switch due to a semantic link to the activity happened on a slightly larger scale during the interview as well:

59) Ibrahim: when the teacher says a word it's difficult sometime when the teacher uses the word in many sentences it might help a lot because in many words it has its own meaning in different sentences you cannot use in so many words

Interviewer: does she use the word in a sentence in Finnish or in English?

Ibrahim: sentence in English ja sitten hän kääntää sen suomeksi

Ibrahim builds onto the conversation in English, but when referencing translation he not only says there is translation, but translates what he is saying into the target language. Ibrahim has demonstrated the capability to say this phrase in English but due to association to the activity he continued the rest of the phrase as the way it would during the lesson.

Students use their L1 in the classroom in a similar manner to the Cantonese speakers in Goldstein (2003) in order to facilitate understanding. This is further supported by students translating the interview questions into the L1 several times during the interview. Like with the Cantonese speakers, one of the students took upon themselves the task of language broker during the interview, as Ali explained several of the questions to the others in Dari during the interview.

4.2.3 Translation as a tool for learning

Because of the difficulty of the learning process being in multiple languages having a presence in the classroom, the main tool used by students when learning English involves translation.

Translation of various passages has often been used in language classrooms as a technique to promote students' learning vocabulary and to ensure that a certain passage has been understood. This is supported for example by Tsagari (2013) whose tests on language comprehension through translation concluded that "[t]herefore, the use of translation cannot guarantee full understanding of the original but good translation grades indicate high comprehension of the original, resulting in more answers that were correct" (p. 15). This method however occurs between the translation of two languages rather than three. This is critical, as for the participants simply translating a passage between Finnish and English does not ensure comprehension either language of an exercise in translation, as if a student succeeds in translating from English to Finnish, they may know that that is the equivalent between these two languages but not know what either word actually means. Because of the possibility on not understanding Finnish or English whether in instruction or in an exercise, during the lesson the number one method used by the students in to translate words between all three languages, English, Finnish and the L1, for full comprehension.

The process of translation itself arouses many different kinds of feelings due to it enabling comprehension, but also being an extremely cumbersome task. A lot of the time translation is seen as tiresome:

60) Dalia: se on tosi vaikeaa, joskus tuntuu, että milloinkaan me emme voi opiskella koska heti pitää päässä kääntää dariksi ja sitten suomeksi ja suoraan englanniksi ja opettaja, joskus on että opettaja kertoo suomeksi mutta me emme osaa tai emme ymmärrä se on tosi vaikea mutta me yritämme

(Dalia: it is very difficult, sometimes I feel, that never can we study because immediately you need to translate into Dari and then in to Finnish and straight into English and the teacher, sometimes it happens tha the teacher tells you in Finnish but we cannot or do not understand, it is very difficult but we try.)

Dalia explains that studying is difficult because she cannot immediately begin working on understanding the material because every task must begin by translation into the L1, which often happens by first translation of words into Finnish or English. This point shows that the process of translation is different from understanding so that simply the act of translation cannot guarantee that students will understand the material. Translation is merely the first step that always needs to be taken before any other action can occur. Dalia feels that time she should be spending on understanding what is being taught is being spent in translating the

material. This feeling of spending a lot of energy is backed up by Tsagari (2013) in whose experiments the participants reported being extremely tired after each translation exercise which Tsagari attributed to students rarely doing these kinds of tasks. Having to translate between one language more certainly adds to the burden of the task and thus increase frustration. This is frustration is expressed in the lament is that translation is not readily available into the L1 in the classroom but rather translation must be done by some other means:

- 61) Yazan: for me when the teacher is translating Finnish to English both language is I can learn better and but there's little difference because when the teacher is telling about the tenses in English our teacher she never write the definition of the tenses what it means for us, I, when I was leaning English in school in there, so there the teacher is was writing also the definition in both language in Dari and in English and it can help us better then

Yazan says that the process of translation was more helpful in his home country where it happened straight into his L1 compared to Finland where it happens into Finnish. Having translation would be most helpful for students when trying to process material that is the most difficult for them. Dalia explains that studying tenses is when she needs to translate the material into Dari

- 62) Dalia: Apuverbit on ollut vähän helpompia mutta ne aikamuodot on tosi vaikea minulle. Pitää kääntää ensin dariksi ja sitten kääntää suomeksi ja sen jälkeen englanniksi.

(Dalia: Helping verbs have been easier but the tenses are very difficult for me. I must translate first into Dari and then translate into Finnish and after that into English).

This is consistent with Nation (2001) that difficult material is better processed in the L1 first before then working in the target language. What adds to the difficulty is that as Dalia explains (example 60), it is not enough to translate words into one language, but translation needs to happen between three languages for her in order to achieve the understanding she requires. It is difficult to say whether Dalia's efforts in translating material twice over with the risk of vital information being lost in translation are useful or whether she should try find some other avenue to try understand difficult grammar.

The translation process itself is not simple either. The participants explain that for translation they mainly use the Google Translate application on their mobile devices, partially due to the function on the application where one can try to find the translation for entire phrases. The use of technology by the students is reflective of modern learning as “The Internet, as a tool, will remain instrumental in providing new forms of learning and teaching within the field of translation.” (Colina & Angelelli, 2017 p.3), however Google Translate is yet to provide perfect translations especially between English and Persian which causes the process to take longer than often preferred,

- 63) Yazan: Because in google translate there is also Farsi or Persian language when we try to translate some language from Finnish to Persian we cannot understand the translation because the translation is not complete in Farsi. So we are translating that to Finnish so it comes better after we understand it well so we are using to translate to Farsi or Persian so we can understand better as before

In example 63 Yazan explains that when translation occurs as it is often faulty when translating from English to Persian, he must translate to Finnish to hopefully understand what is being said. Despite the Persian translation being often wrong, all the participants except for Ali said that they would first try to translate the word or phrase into Dari before turning to English, most likely to try save time. As explained in example 63, when the Persian translation is incomplete students turn to the language they are more likely to understand next, which is Finnish, becoming one of the major reasons the participants felt that Finnish was a useful language for them to use in the classroom:

- 64) Ali: minusta tuntuu tosi helppo koska kun opettaja puhuu suomeksi ja hän opetta englannin kieli mää voi opettakin suomeksi sekä englanniksi, silloin se auttaa ja minun oma kieli on dari, darinkieli ja farsin kieli, kun minä laitan sen kääntäjälle se ei tule mitä minä haluan, se tulee erilainen, mutta sen suomen kieli, kun mä tiedän mitä se tarkoittaa jos minä laitan sen kääntäjälle ja haluan vaihtaa englanniksi se tulee mitä minä haluan, se tulee täydellinen, ja sama kun haluan englannin suomeen ja suomeen englannin, se helpottaa ja aina oppia uusia asioita, se on hyvä

(Ali: for me it feels really easy because when the teacher speaks in Finnish and teaches English I can learn Finnish and English, this helps when my own language is Dari, the Dari language and Farsi language, when I put it into the translator it does not give me what I want, it is different, but in Finnish, when I know what it means and I want to switch to English it gives me what I want, it is perfect, and the same when I

want English to Finnish and Finnish to English and always learn new things, it is good.)

Ali explains in example 64 that he learns new things when he is being forced to translate into Finnish rather than Persian because of the faulty translation into Persian. Having to learn English through Finnish in the class makes learning Finnish even more of a priority simply because the tools that are available for the students are better in Finnish than in the L1. However even translation between English and Finnish is not infallible as Dalia says that sometime the translation is inaccurate or completely wrong. Due to these problems where the online translator is not able to provide the correct translation, Dalia prefers to use a physical English-Finnish dictionary:

65) Dalia: mutta ehkä sanakirja on parempi, se on tarkka, kääntäjä, jos muutama kerta on kun opettaja antanut joku teksti meidän pitää suomentaa sitten me kirjoitamme mutta opettaja sanoi ei olen niin oikein se ei tarkoita mitään suomeksi tai englanniksi. ”

(but maybe the dictionary is better, it is accurate, the translator, if a few times when the teacher gave us a text we had to translate into Finnish then we wrote but the teacher said no it is not like that it does not mean anything in Finnish nor English).

Dalia's motivation to use a book is linked to the teacher discussing with her that the result she received from an online dictionary is faulty and that the correct translation is available in a book version. To safeguard from translation mistakes when using an online translator there are other options available for the students. These are to ask a friend if the translation is accurate or check online for some context clues as to how the word is being used. Ibrahim says that “even we use one site from google maybe we can use another site compare it you get more information from that.” Ibrahim thus expresses the students have become somewhat habituated with crosschecking information online to get more reliable translations.

One of the problems with single word translations is that words can change meanings in different sentences, which is why neither dictionaries nor the translator can help in these situations:

66) Ibrahim: Most of the time I get help from translator, google translator and also it helps but when I translate it to a Finnish or my mother language the result is word word it

translate the google translator it cannot taivuttaa kieliopissa se on vähän vaikea (taivuttaa kieliopissa se on vähän vaikea= twist in grammar it is a little difficult)

When the translator does not work students use other means. This includes asking a friend or the teacher who may translate the word into Finnish, try use context or miming, or to use Google search or image search to try find the right answer:

67) Dalia: joskus opettaja näyttää, että hän esimerkeiksi piirtää taulussa jos taas me emme ymmärrä hän näyttää käsillä, että sitten me ymmärrämme mitä tarkoittaa se sana.

(Dalia: sometimes the teacher shows that she for example draws on the board, if again we do not understand she shows with her hands that then we understand what the word means)

Miming and drawing of course have their limitations as we reach terminology similar to “gratitude” or “willingness” in which case the teacher must resort to other means such as giving context to the word:

68) Dalia: myös opettaja käyttää paljon esimerkkejä, esimerkiksi näin, esimerkiksi näin sitten ymmärrämme

Ali: esimerkki auttaa meitä

Interviewer: onko esimerkit kuvia? Lauseita?

Dalia: eri lauseita

Ali: lauseita ja se opettaja kääntää sen suomeksi että ymmärrämme

Ibrahim: when the teacher say a words it difficult sometime when the teacher uses the word in many sentences it might help a lot because in many words it has its own meaning in different sentence you cannot use in so many words

Interviewer: does she use the word in a sentence in Finnish or in English?

Ibrahim: sentence in English ja sitten hän kääntää sen suomeksi

(Dalia: The teacher also uses a lot of examples, for example like this, for example like this, then we understand

Ali: examples help us

Interviewer: are the examples pictures? Phrases?

Dalia: different phrases

Ali: phrases and the teacher translates it into Finnish so that we understand

Ibrahim: when the teacher say a words it difficult sometime when the teacher uses the word in many sentences it might help a lot because in many words it has its own meaning in different sentence you cannot use in so many words

Interviewer: does she use the word in a sentence in Finnish or in English?

Ibrahim: sentence in English and then she translates it into Finnish)

This exchange demonstrates that the teacher uses all the linguistic resources available to her in order for her students to understand a word or phrase, meaning that the teacher in addition to pictures and miming will use both English and Finnish translations with context for added clues in her explanations to give the students as many cues as possible for use. The teacher of this class thus has also had to adapt to the situation so that she is able to use as many resources as possible to ensure that all her students are able to understand the words that she is trying to teach.

Like the teacher miming, drawing pictures and using context to translate a word, the participants have found similar methods to use with the internet as the internet too has images and context that the students may use to track the meaning behind a word:

The internet is used so that the participants will input a word into the search engine in a language and see from context which result gives the most reliable answer for their query. Pictures cannot define every type of words and thus Google search provides contexts to these words that may help in explaining their definition. These last methods, especially relating to images are important when taking into context those individuals who cannot read and write in their own language and thus can only use their peers and an image search as a resource for translation into the L1. Lastly, Ali's saying "kaikkia me kokeilemme" (we try everything) in reference to the list of translation method does show that there is a great repertoire of options for translation that the students use, and also perhaps a willingness to add to it if necessary which as an attitude will help in find the optimal tools for translation as it is seen necessary in the classroom, which shows that this particular environment has succeeded in fostering an atmosphere where the participants feel that they have options for finding answers rather than outright giving up.

4.2.4 *Language loss*

Language loss refers to the phenomenon where one's language skills are weakened. Language loss is most often studied within the context of L1 loss, especially in the context of learning an L2 (Köpke 2007) and this analysis shall focus on the phenomenon from the sociocultural perspective where context matters on language development and regression. The theme of language loss was present in the interview in the context of both weakening of the L1 as well as of the L2 and the contexts that this happens in.

When speaking of L1 language loss, the context was linked to the language classroom where students used three languages:

69) Ali: Kielioppia tosi vaikea se vähän sekaisin me koska silloin me opiskelemme kolme kieltä yhtäkaa emme osaa yhtään kieliä täydellisesti että ymmärrämme jes! se on se näin ja voimme opiskella sen toinen, se kolme kieli on ihan kelillä sekaisiin joskus unohdamme oma kieli mutta on hauskaa.

(Ali: Grammar is very difficult it is a little mixed up because when we study three languages at the same time we do not know any language perfectly that we would understand yes! It is like this and we can study the other, the three languages are completely mixed up sometimes we forget our own language but we have fun.)

Ali in example 69 explains how as the students study three languages and know none to perfection which causes all languages to get muddled up to the degree that sometimes they forget their own language. Adamson & Feng (2013) in their models demonstrated that minorities who do not receive instruction in their L1 in the Republic of China at times lost their ability to speak it altogether. This is noteworthy here as it could be linked to the reason that the participants reported L1 language loss as they did not receive L1 teaching in their school. Of L1 attrition Köpke (2007) writes “while there is clearly an attrition effect, the amount of use of the L1 in daily life does not seem to have any predictive power of this effect. Quality of contact is more important than quantity” (p. 150). It could then be argued that the quality of interaction in the L2 and L3 (perhaps of an L4) were of higher quality as they were in an academic setting, whereas the L1 would be used mainly in everyday interaction with friends. Especially in the case of those who do not know how to read and write in the L1, the quality of interaction may be further lessened. This would contribute to L1 language

loss even if students spent the majority of their day using the L1 on their own as unless their context demands that the L1 use is of a higher level the language use will not need to develop or remain maintained on a high level.

The students despite some L1 loss also speak of loss of the English language. This they themselves attribute to less use of what they have learnt:

- 70) Ibrahim: When we are learning the new vocabularies or the new words in school after that we must to use it we have to use it in our speaking but unfortunately when we are going back to home we are talking our mother language so before we are gonna forget the words we have learnt in school so its hard also when we are using our mother language in here, so we can learn as fast as we can in the Finnish language in or also the English language.

This example is of Ibrahim explaining how he experiences loss of English as he does not keep practicing using the language the same way he has practiced Finnish so that it has progressed greatly. As Ibrahim speaks of learning Finnish fairly fast he implies that there is little loss of the Finnish language in comparison to English. Here we can see the effect context has on language learning and regression as due to Finnish being the instruction language at the school as well as being the majority language of the region, Finnish receives the greatest amount of high quality use and English receives less, a hypothesis supported by similar finding by Hansen (2012) on attrition of L2 Spanish in adult English speakers. Despite the smaller amount of exposure, with the introduction of Swedish into the mix Ibrahim reported fluency both foreign languages suffering:

- 71) Ibrahim: The situations we are learning three language at the same time and I am learning Finnish very well and I also learn English but at the same time Swedish language. And cause I don't like Swedish language its conversations and grammars a little different and when I study something Finnish or English up to that when we have Swedish three years then it mixed all the things and I forgot all the things what I studied in English and Finnish, that's why Swedish always disturbed me to learn these two languages and my friend Gabriel told to me take the Swedish language is the worst language

In example 71 Ibrahim shows that the addition of Swedish to new languages being learn has had a negative effect on the other languages he is learning. Despite daily use of especially Finnish, perhaps it is still a new enough language that it was equally susceptible to influence

from Swedish the same way as English was. There is the more at play than simply context, thus countering the various sociological studies presented at the beginning of section 2.2 as the surroundings the student are in support mainly Finnish use, yet it was susceptible to loss due to the introduction of Swedish to the mix. There is no clear answer as to how this mix-up should be minimised as students have to learn all three languages at school. Loss is minimised by contexts demanding quality use, so supporting the teaching of each language at maximum quality is at least partially the answer, but it is unclear is there a true way to not have any mix-up in this situation.

5 Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate how students learn English in a classroom where the language used to facilitate learning was a foreign language; in this case it was Finnish. The findings showed that the L1 as well as Finnish and English were present throughout the language learning process as students worked towards an aim of acquiring English for use as a lingua franca. The language learning community worked through cultural as well as linguistic hurdles as communication was impeded by students not knowing enough Finnish or English to understand everything and could not express themselves to the fullest. The multilingual aspect of language acquisition showed how students tried to make use of all languages available to them in learning. At times however the low level of Finnish or English meant that language loss and mix-up was present or that the environment not requiring demanding L1 use meant loss in this language. Translation was the most important language learning tool and was used in a variety of ways in the learning process.

The multilingual factors in learning mapped out the content of language learning on an individual level. Learning the structures of English involved students overcoming the difficulties created by the fact that the students were learning multiple languages and not able to understand the material in a foreign language. Despite the difficulties created by the multilingualism, students were utilising all languages they had learnt for support in learning English. Language switch was apparent in that students made use of drawing between similarities in the different languages, and that they were learning multiple languages at once. The various environments for language use was seen in code switching and how it was present in the participants' language use. The most important tool for learning was translation, as this helped students understand material and learn new vocabulary. The challenge in the process of translation was that it had to be done multiple times which was time consuming. Lastly, though students were able to learn the various languages, language loss was present, and this was linked to the places that the specific language was used and its level. Language loss was present in all languages that students used.

A point of discussion in relation to the previous research was that there was little to no concrete, applicable information on how a foreign language is learnt through another foreign

language. The most comprehensive study relating to learning was that of Goldstein (2003). This study however focused on learning mathematics, which leaves out the dimension of handling a foreign culture through multiple cultures. Thus the aim of the investigation was to answer questions such as what the students' attitudes towards language learning are like and what strategies are used to overcome any difficulties that arise due to the environment. What is most important to remember is that each student was able to learn English despite the challenges that they faced. Previous studies had mainly focused on the maximisation of the use of the L1 without consideration of the benefits that an L2 might have despite being less optimal. A solution to some of these problems was the use of translation so that the multilingual environment offered an opportunity for students to learn English and at times Finnish as well. Translation was clearly seen as the most important tool which was done with the use of technological resources as well as through peer support as students required resources to draw from as language barriers occurred. Efficient translating gives students space to begin thinking about content. Similarly, images and other nonverbal methods of communicating information enable the bridging of the gaps in understanding especially if there is a higher level of illiteracy in the group. One of the more surprising elements was the importation of competition between students into the classroom due to cultural factors. The import is subtle compared to other cultural factors such as tribalism that could have been present yet the competitive element presented itself as a difficult issue to overcome especially to those for whom English was a difficult subject. One of the challenges a teacher faces is thus to foster the growth of positive cultural attributes that students bring with them whilst minimising the negative ones in a constructive manner. Considering that teachers have to take into consideration that some students have not had the chance to go to school, a concern this analysis could not address due to lack of material was whether students had built steady study habits and whether they know what was expected of them at a school. Those who had been to school in their home countries seemed to have a grasp of what they needed to do to keep up their language learning, but this might not be evident for all students.

A peculiarity in this case is that the environment is in fact more homogenous than many other classes for immigrants as all the members spoke some dialect of Persian though their cultural backgrounds may have differed slightly. This has both strengths and weaknesses. As a strength, this means that this study is able to focus with increased precision on how a specific cultural community learns English through Finnish. This enables the mapping out of the

various themes that appear within language learning and gives the individual more space partly due to the fact that as a single researcher the research into the students' countries, language, and cultures was much less time consuming than if I were to have to research those of ten different representatives. This is important considering that the research is done from a sociocultural perspective. The weakness to the more unified group is that it is not able to look at communication in the classroom through the perspective of how students from a variety of cultures are able to navigate the classroom. Due to the circumstances this part of cultural interaction is omitted completely and should be a topic for further study.

Another factor to consider is that I was not a speaker of the L1 of the students. This presented itself as strengths and weaknesses in the research process. It was a strength because the interview was conducted in English and Finnish, and I was able to get a glimpse into how the classroom may conduct itself and how the different languages play together. It was a weakness as the students were not in their comfort zone linguistically and so their ability to express themselves was limited. In addition, analysis of the data could not delve too deeply into sentence construction and into looking at the use of specific words as it is difficult to say whether a word was chosen because of its exact meaning or because it is the only variant the student was familiar with.

I propose that future studies should focus on the following areas: an increased number of cultures and languages within the classroom is bound to produce a fascinating environment. This heterogeneity relates to the question of translation and translation tools, possibly as supported by technology, as well as classroom communication. Further technological innovations and use strategies could be used to improve translation methods to make the process slightly less tiresome. Another starting point for further research focus could be the teachers' perspective to examine how a teacher is able to navigate a classroom where the students' backgrounds and skill levels differ starkly, especially if the classroom has students who are extremely proficient in English and students who have never been to school. Equally, an important question is how the background and experiences of a teacher reflect their understanding of a multicultural classroom. As the globe becomes increasingly multicultural, these occurrences will become more common and more varied, and thus research into the area will equally become more important for research.

In conclusion, the study set out to ask how students learn English in a classroom where teaching is in Finnish as a foreign language. The analysis of the semi-structured interview through thematic analysis yielded two greater themes which were an exploration on the community and multilingual aspects of learning English. The community level of analysis focused on the motivations of the students for learning as well as the organisation of the classroom. The students were motivated to learn English for use as a lingua franca, as motivation linked to their backgrounds. Learning as a process was also considered a multifaceted phenomenon where the process took place in a classroom with a teacher as well as with their peers or on their own. All the learning processes had different benefits and challenges to them as different people had need for the use of different languages and varying degrees of support. The classroom communication was multicultural and multilingual as students strove to understand the Finnish and English teaching with support from peers in their L1. Motivation was highly linked to the teacher's presence and the support and encouragement she was able to give, which may be linked to cultural factors. Motivation was impeded by competition and comparison to others, which too may be linked to cultural factors.

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